THE

SINNER'S COMPLAINTS

TO

GOD:

BEING

Devout Entertainments

OF THE

SOUL with GOD,

Fitted for all States and Conditions of CHRISTIANS, whatever their Circumstances or Necessities be.

By *J. G.* AUTHOR of the *Instructions on the* Epistles *and* Gospels *for all the* Sundays, *and* Moveable Feasts, *of the Year*, &c.

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TO THE

READER.

TO *offer Help to ſuch as are in Want, needs no Apology; therefore I make none; but only tell the Reader, that Compaſſion on the General Corruption of Chriſtians, has been the Occaſion of this Work, and accordingly it offers Help to all; there being no Kind of Sinner, whatever his Unhappineſs or Infirmity be, but here is conducted before the Throne of Mercy, from whence all his Help is to come, and likewiſe taught, how to aſk for the Help he wants: And not only to aſk, but ſo many Inſtructions are mixed with the Petitions, that while he aſks, he will likewiſe ſee how to amend, and find, I hope, while he ſpeaks to God, that God at the ſame Time ſpeaks to him.*

If the Petitions, under ſome Heads, ſeem to him long, I muſt deſire him to reflect, that there are ſome Chriſtians, who, having their Time at command, have good Inclinations to conſecrate ſome Hours of it, every Day, to God; it is reaſonable, they ſhould be provided with Exerciſes, anſwerable to their Leiſure, and to the pious Diſpoſitions of their Hearts. I deſire him to reflect again, that as Multiplicity of Diſtempers multiplies Remedies; ſo here, Help being offered to all, the infinite Number of Spiritual Infirmities muſt neceſſarily encreaſe the Numbers of Petitions. But then ſince all, as it is to be hoped, is not the Caſe of all, after a ſhort Peruſal, it will be in every one's Power to make them ſhorter, by paſſing thoſe by, which they find do not concern them, and thus they may accommodate them to their own Time and Circumſtances.

There's another Objection may occur to ſome againſt the Length, on Account of the Reproof given in the Goſpel to the Phariſees, *for* making long Prayers. *But it being obſerved that Chriſt our Redeemer, who never did any Thing reproveable, ſpent whole Nights in Prayer, and that both he and his Apoſtles*

Apoſtles adviſe all to Pray without Ceaſing, *it muſt be obvious, that it is not the Length of Prayers, or applying the Soul for a long Time to this Exerciſe, which is cenſured in that Reproof; but only the ſaying long Prayers, with the depraved Deſign of the* Phariſees, *that is, to be ſeen by Men, to gain Reputation, and be eſteemed devout. This is certainly hypocritical and prophane: But when it is done, purely to ſeek God, and to ſolicit for his Help, this, of itſelf, is not capable of Exceſs: Since, allowing only for Circumſtances, God can be no more ſought, than he can be loved too much, and we cannot give too much to him, to whom all is due.*

But now, while I anſwer Objections, let thoſe tepid Chriſtians anſwer one to me, thoſe who take Shelter under this Reproof, and make it their Plea for neglecting this Duty of Prayer; let theſe conſider, if they are prepared to anſwer for their Neglect, What will they ſay to theſe Articles?

Firſt, *That ſo often failing in thoſe great Duties, on which their Eternity depends; and there being no Poſſibility of Help, but from God; they ſtill live on careleſs and unconcerned, without uſing due Endeavours*

in praying for that Help, which they cannot want, but with their Eternal Ruin?

2dly, *That having their Hearts corrupted with ſinful Paſſions, their Souls conſuming under Variety of Ulcers, and there being no poſſible Cure, but from God, they ſtill live on ſo careleſs and unconcerned, as not to uſe due Endeavours, in praying for that Help which they cannot want, but with their eternal Ruin?*

3dly, *That having their Souls lying under the Guilt of great Sins, which, without a ſincere Repentance, muſt be certainly their Damnation, and which Repentance they cannot poſſibly obtain, but thro' the Gift of God; they ſtill live on ſo far careleſs and unconcerned, as not to uſe due Endeavours in praying for that Help, which they cannot want, but with their eternal Ruin?*

4thly, *That having their Time of Life in this World ſo uncertain, in which all the Help they want of God is to be obtained, that they have not the Security even of one Week, of one Day, or one Hour; they ſtill live on every Day ſo careleſs, as to the Endeavours, which ought to be uſed, for obtaining*

taining this Help, as if they had the Power of Life and Death in their own Hands, and were ſecure, that Death would not ſurprize them, but certainly wait their Leiſure, and give them Time neceſſary for making all the Preparation they want for Dying well.

Laſtly, *That finding Time for every Thing belonging to this World; and their Buſineſs, and Intereſt, and Sports, and Entertainments, and Gaming, and Viſits, and Vanity, and unneceſſary Sleep, and for all the Demands of Sloth, Self-love, and the World; and not only finding Time, but alſo being induſtrious in all theſe Particulars, ſo as to ſtudy and contrive, and take Pains, and venture many Inconveniencies for gaining this Time; it is only for Prayer, they cannot find Leiſure; and whenever they ſpare ſome little Time for it, is generally run over in ſuch Haſte, performed with ſo very little Care, with ſo much Diſſipation of Thought, that it ſeems rather ſome outward Compliance, and a meer Lip-Service, than a real Concern for obtaining any Thing of God.*

Let theſe tepid Chriſtians, who are thus careleſs in this great Duty, and indiſpenſable Expedient of Prayer, ſee if they can

anſwer, I do not ſay to me, but to their own Conſciences and to God, theſe Articles drawn up againſt them.

They are ſecure in one Point, that they ſhall not be condemned with the Phariſees, *for ſaying, or loving long Prayers; but what Security have they, not to be condemned, for omitting or tranſgreſſing the Fundamental Duties, which are enjoined them by the Goſpel they profeſs?*

For, without accounting for their poſitive Crimes, is it not to be feared, from this one Neglect of Prayer, as laid open under the foregoing Heads; Firſt, *That they have not a Senſe of the unhappy State of their Soul, occaſioned by their many Infirmities, Diſorders and Sins.* 2dly, *That they have not a true Concern for the Amendment of them.* 3dly, *That they are not ſolicitous to repent, and conſequently, not ſerious in deſiring to make their Peace with God.* 4thly, *Nor ſerious in the Buſineſs of Salvation.* 5thly, *That they do not love God, nor in earneſt ſerve him.* 6thly, *Nor ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God.* 7thly, *But are much more concerned for Earth, for their Intereſt, Satisfaction,* &c. *than for Heaven.* 8thly, *That*

That they love the World, which is Enmity with God. 9thly, *Are lukewarm, which is an Abomination to him.*

I preſs not this by Way of Reproach, but upon the Motive of true Charity, to awaken theſe Chriſtians, and give them a timely Senſe of their Unhappineſs, before Death takes it out of their Power to work their Deliverance; and I beg ſuch, as ſhall be convinced, to take this Rule over with them; That till they can raiſe their Soul to God with Earneſtneſs, and are ſolicitous to obtain of Him Remedy for their Spiritual Wants, they have not ſufficient Grounds for entertaining very favourable Hopes, as to their future State. *So neceſſary do I think Prayer to be, for all ſuch as are ſerious in the Concern of Eternity.*

But then I do not intend this as an Inſinuation, for recommending the following Exerciſe. No, I leave all to the Uſe and Method of ſuch Prayers as they ſhall find moſt beneficient to them, whether in Book, or in Spirit only. But as for ſuch as ſhall make Choice of this Manual, finding a Form helpful to them, I hope they will meet here what may give them a Senſe of their

Infirmities, raiſe their Hearts toward God, and make them earneſt in ſoliciting for Help. If it has theſe good Effects, I have likewiſe my Deſign, and I own, it will be a Comfort to me, to become inſtrumental to the Good, even of the leaſt Soul that lives. For this End, I recommend it to Thee, O God, and beſeech Thee to give a Bleſſing to it.

Juſt Publiſh'd,

A MANUAL of Inſtructions and Prayers uſeful to a Chriſtian. Tranſlated from the *Italian.*

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THE SINNER'S COMPLAINTS TO GOD.

Morning Exercises for all States and Conditions.

In the Morning.

I Return Thee Thanks, O Eternal God, for my Preservation this Night: I own it thy Mercy, that Thou hast brought me to the Beginning of this Day; my Being is from Thee; Preserve now, I beseech Thee, thy own Gift; take me into thy Protection, watch over me, and so strengthen me by thy holy Grace, that, avoiding this Day all whatever is sinful, my Thoughts, Words, and Actions may be wholly directed by thy Law, and thy Name be glorified in the Being Thou hast given me.

Grant, O God, I may be careful in every Duty belonging to my State; that I may suffer no

no Neglect, Sloth or Self-love, to hinder me in the faithful Diſcharge of whatever Obligations are upon me: And let it be the merciful Effect of thy Grace in me, that I perform them all as a Chriſtian, and not as a Heathen or Unbeliever.

For this End, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee in whatever I do, to raiſe up my Heart above worldly Intereſt, temporal Convenience, and human Reſpects; for ſo far the Heathen looks; all theſe I know to be the Conſiderations of ſuch as know not God. But ſince, by thy Grace, I have a Faith in Thee, and in a Life Eternal to come, let this Faith have an Influence upon all I do, ſo as to undertake and begin every Thing in thy Holy Name, and to offer all to thy Glory.

In this Manner, O God, may all my Actions of this Day be diſtinguiſhed in thy Sight, from the Unbeliever; ſo that, while he ſeeks nothing, but doing his own Will, and propoſes nothing farther than ſome temporal Convenience; I may undertake all in Compliance with thy holy Will, inaſmuch as it is a Duty Thou haſt laid upon me, is well pleaſing in thy Sight, and may find Acceptance with Thee, in order to the gaining eternal Life,

Thus, O bleſſed Lord, may I live, not only to myſelf and to the World, but more eſpecially to Thee. Thus, O God, may I return to Thee, every Day, the Life Thou haſt given me; thus, while I am in the Fleſh, may I ſeek the Things that are above, and be ever ſolicitous, that my Life be the Life of the Righteous,

Righteous, that is, the Life of Faith, ſince it is by Faith the Juſt Man lives.

That this may be now my Life, behold I bow down and acknowledge Thee the Sovereign Lord of all; I adore Thee, as the Author of all Created Beings, and ſupreme Governor of the Univerſe. Thou art the *Beginning* and *End*, and therefore I confeſs it thy Right, that whatever I do, ſhould *begin* and *end* in Thee.

Upon this Principle of thy eſſential Right, behold, O God, in Submiſſion to thy Holy Will, and becauſe Thou requireſt it, I offer myſelf to all the Obligations of this Day, I undertake all in Obedience to thy Direction, and beg thy Bleſſing may attend me in all my Undertakings. And becauſe the End of the whole Creation is thy Glory; and not only I, but all that I am to do, is a Part of the Creation; therefore I offer both myſelf, and all the Actions of this Day, to thy Honour; deſiring ſo to live this Day, that I may be as a Sacrifice of ſweet Savour before Thee, and Thou, the ſupreme Lord, mayſt be glorified in me thy Creature.

To accompliſh this, I propoſe to do nothing this Day, but what thy Holy Will ſeems to demand of me, according to the Order of Providence, and the Obligations of my State, in which Thou haſt placed me. And as for all Things which are diſpleaſing to Thee, I reſolve, through thy Grace, to avoid them, and to reſiſt all Inclinations that lead me to them.

But becauſe I am ſenſible of my own great Weakneſs, and of the many Ways, in which I every

every Day offend Thee; therefore I earneſtly implore thy Aſſiſtance for the good Government of all my Paſſions, and likewiſe of all the Faculties both of Soul and Body; that I may be watchful againſt all evil Inclinations, and renounce all the Appearances of Sin. Help me, O Bleſſed Lord, in this, and ſo ſtrengthen me by thy Grace, that I may ſtand reſolute againſt all Temptations, ill Cuſtoms, and Perſuaſions; that I may give thy Will the Preference to all the ſinful Flatteries of the World and Self-love, and that nothing may be able to draw me into Sin.

Give me thy Grace likewiſe, that I may not neglect, but lay hold of all the Opportunites of doing good that ſhall offer themſelves this Day; and alſo Patience to bear whatever Troubles ſhall be, this Day, my Exerciſe. In theſe and all other my Neceſſities, be Thou, O Merciful God, my Helper, that I may employ this Addition which Thou giveſt me, of my Life, to thy Glory; and as I come every Day nearer to the End of my Life, ſo I am every Day come nearer to the great End for which I was created; that is, the Poſſeſſion of Thee, my Lord and my God.

Another for ſuch as are ſtreightened in Time.

INTO thy Care and Protection, O Father Almighty, I recommend myſelf, as of myſelf being nothing, and having my whole Dependance on Thee. Accompany me, I beſeech Thee, this Day, and by thy Grace preſerve me from all whatever is diſpleaſing to Thee, that the

the Continuance of my Life being thy Mercy to me, I may not offend Thee in thy own Gifts.

Let the ſame Grace, O God, enable me in the Performance of all the Duties of this Day, that neither Sloth, Self-love, or ill Company, may occaſion in me any Omiſſion; but that I be faithful in them, and perform them all in the Spirit of a Chriſtian, that is, to thy Glory.

Let it be thy Mercy to me to avoid all Occaſions of Sin, and to ſtrengthen me in ſuch Dangers as are unavoidable. Preſerve me likewiſe from all other Misfortunes and ill Accidents, and let not the Devil, in any Kind, have Power over me. O God, this one Thing I aſk of Thee, that thou leave me not to myſelf, but that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may live this Day as a Chriſtian, to thy Glory, and my own everlaſting Good.

For a Maſter or Miſtreſs of a Family.

I Implore thy Mercy, O God, for my Direction and Help this Day, that I may duly perform every Obligation belonging to my State. Thou art Sovereign Lord of the whole World, and I am only thy Deputy in this little Sphere in which Thou haſt placed me: Grant therefore, I beſeech Thee, that as I act by thy Commiſſion, ſo I may have thy Aſſiſtance, both for conſidering in all Things what is thy Will, and for faithfully performing whatever Thou haſt left me in Charge.

Grant me, O Lord, the Spirit of Diſcretion, that I may diſcover in all Things what is beſt to be done; that I may ſo manage both my Words

Words and Actions, as never to provoke Miſchief, but to anſwer the Obligations, which thou haſt laid upon me.

Grant me the Spirit of Fidelity, that I may be faithful in taking Care of what, under Thee, I have in Charge. That nothing may ſuffer through my Neglect, Idleneſs, Prodigality or Ill-management; but that I may perform all with Diligence, Induſtry, and a Solicitude for doing well; and make a Conſcience of doing ſo.

Give me the Spirit of Moderation; that Paſſion may have no Influence on my Words or Actions; that I may bear all the Provocations, Trouble and Burden of the Day with Patience. That I may reprove without Anger, command without Imperiouſneſs, require Service without Cruelty, have Compaſſion on ſuch Failings, as are rather Weakneſs, than Neglect; and ſhew a Tenderneſs to all under my Charge; as knowing that both they and I have one Maſter in Heaven, who will call all to an Account, and has no Reſpect of Perſons.

Give me, O Lord, a Love for my Duty, that there may be my Delight, where my Obligations call me. And whatever Inclinations thou ſeeſt in me, which draw me from the Buſineſs of my State, all theſe, I beſeech Thee, O God, powerfully to ſuppreſs, and let me never want thy Grace to ſtand againſt them. For how unhappy muſt I be, if I am governed by Inclination, and not by Duty!

Grant likewiſe, O Lord, that I may keep out of my Doors all Kind of Extravagance and Exceſs; let no Sort of Diſorder find Encouragement

ment here, that while I profeſs thy Name, my Houſe may be ſacred to Thee, and not be polluted with Profanations, Riots and Sacrifices to the Devil. For this End, grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may be a zealous Obſerver of good Diſcipline, and be ever watchful againſt all undue Liberties: And that all may go well, may I be, at all Times, and in all Things, ſolicitous to give good Example; ſince thus only I am to expect thy Bleſſing.

Help me, O Lord, in all other Particulars; for, behold, my Charge is great and difficult, and I am weak, ſubject to many Overſights, and eaſily drawn from my Duty. But ſince my Weakneſſes are all known to Thee, who haſt put this Truſt into my Hands, I hope thou wilt give me both Light and Grace to perform all in ſuch a Manner as may be acceptable to Thee.

Suffer me not to be unjuſt to any, in denying or neglecting juſt Debts, much leſs in detaining the Wages of the hired Servant or Labourer; becauſe this is an Oppreſſion, which thou haſt threatened with the greateſt Severity, and I cannot expect thy Bleſſing, if I wilfully incur this Guilt.

Deliver me from all immoderate Solicitude, and let no Exceſs of worldly Care take off my Heart from my greateſt Concern of Eternity.

Grant that I may not connive at what ought to be reproved, nor let thoſe under my Care be unprovided of what is neceſſary for their Spiritual Good.

In all my Duties aſſiſt me, O God, that I may duly ſatisfy whatever depends upon my Care,

Care. In thy Name I begin this Day; I undertake the Concerns and Labours of it, in Submiſſion to thy holy Will; I offer myſelf to all the Troubles of it, to comply with the Order of thy Providence; I moſt humbly beſeech Thee to grant me Patience, that I may bear them as a Diſciple of Chriſt: I beg thy Bleſſing upon all I am to do or ſuffer this Day, and I offer all to thy Glory. O God, go along with me, and help me, according to my Neceſſities, both now and for ever.

For Parents.

ASSIST me, O God, this Day, in diſcharging my Duty to my Children: I acknowledge the Difficulty of the Charge, and the infinite Indiſcretions or Ill-managements to which I am ſubject; and therefore I moſt humbly beg thy Help.

Help me, O God, that I may do all Things this Day, as may moſt contribute to their Good. Give me that true Chriſtian Diſcretion, that I may ſee what to deny and what to grant them; and ſuffer not, I beſeech Thee, either Paſſion, ill Humour, or Fondneſs, ſo far to prevail with me, as either to deny them any reaſonable Encouragement, or to yield to them in any Thing that will be to their Prejudice, either of Body or Mind.

Give me Light and Strength of Mind in this great Affair, that no Part of Chriſtian Education may be wanting to my Children, thro' any Neglect or Fault of mine; that ſo they may grow up thy faithful Servants; and if they

ſhould

ſhould prove otherwiſe, that I may have this Comfort, at leaſt, under ſo great a Misfortune, that their Ruin has been no Fault of mine.

But for this, O God, how much do I want of thy Direction and Help! How many Ways ſhall I fail in this Duty, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not teach me! Aſſiſt me therefore, I beſeech Thee, under all my Weakneſs, and let not my Unworthineſs ſhut up the Hands of thy Goodneſs againſt me, and leave me to be the unhappy Occaſion of my Childrens Ruin.

That I may have no Part in this, let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me to give them good Example, in all that belongs to a Chriſtian Life, and with a daily Watchfulneſs to take care, that nothing be ſaid or done before them, which may inſtruct them in Evil.

For the ſame End I beg thy Grace, O God, that I may be ever careful in keeping a ſtrict Diſcipline in my Family, and baniſhing whatever is diſorderly; that ſo, being the Head of a Family, I may anſwer my Obligation to all that are in it; and, by a conſtant Regularity, prevent thoſe many Sins, and other Miſchiefs, which are inſeparable from an undiſciplined and diſorderly Life.

Grant likewiſe, O God, that I may be wanting in no Care for the comfortable Subſiſtance of my Children in this Life, but that I may be induſtrious in making a due Proviſion for them. I confeſs it to be often the Occaſion of Ruin, both as to Soul and Body, for Youth to be left to ſtruggle with Neceſſity; and that it is unnatural in Parents thus to expoſe their

Children,

Children. Wherefore, I moſt earneſtly beg of Thee, moſt Bleſſed Lord, to (prevent in me, or) take from me all Manner of Prodigality and ill Management, and to grant me that true Government of all my Inclinations, that I may no Ways concur in making my Children unhappy. Let neither the Love of Gaming, Intemperance, ill Company, Entertainments, Vanity, or Sports; let no Neglect, Projects, or any Indiſcretion ſo far prevail with me, as to be the Occaſion of bringing Miſery upon my Family. What can an Enemy do worſe than this? And what an unnatural Parent then muſt I be, if I take this Part upon me, and even make that my Entertainment, which muſt make thoſe miſerable, whom, by the ſtricteſt Duty, I am bound to ſupport and comfort! Deliver me, O merciful God, from being thus wretched, and ſuffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to fall into this Sin, which, as Thou thyſelf haſt already judged and publiſhed it, makes a Chriſtian worſe than a Heathen.

Preſerve me likewiſe, O God, from running into the other Extreme, of preparing my Children for Unhappineſs, by being too ſolicitous to make them great. Rather, O Lord, let me be contented with what is moderate, more deſirous to put my Children in Circumſtances for living good Chriſtians, than appear great; and never let me diſable myſelf from doing Good in my Generation, upon the Project of making unreaſonable Additions to their Fortune.

Direct me, O God, in all other Particulars that can contribute to the Chriſtian Education

of

of my Children, and help me in diſcerning and avoiding all that can be injurious to them. Take from me all hurtful Partiality, which does Miſchief on both Sides; and no leſs, with the Injuſtice of its Favours, than its Frowns; and grant me ſuch Moderation, as never to be tired in the Endeavours for doing them good; and never to give them ſuch Diſcouragements or unreaſonable Uneaſineſs, as to put them upon raſh Methods for the Remedy of the Trouble they find at Home.

Remember, O Father Almighty, that Thou art a Father to them; and ſince I am ſo weak, who am deputed by Thee, to have the immediate Care and Government of them, mercifully ſupply by thy Goodneſs whatever is wanting in me. Let thy Grace always attend them, preſerving them from Evil, and directing them to all Good. Confirm them againſt the Corruption of the World and of Sin; deliver them from all Effects of a vain and inconſtant Mind: Give them Diſcretion to avoid all Snares, and to chooſe that which is beſt; and in all their Undertakings be Thou a Bleſſing to them, this Day and for ever; that living here thy faithful Children, they may come at length to that Inheritance which Chriſt has purchaſed for them. *Amen.*

For Huſband or Wife.

O God, who has ordained this State, in which I am engaged, give me Grace to comply with all the Obligations of it, and help me

Children. Wherefore, I moſt earneſtly beg of Thee, moſt Bleſſed Lord, to (prevent in me, or) take from me all Manner of Prodigality and ill Management, and to grant me that true Government of all my Inclinations, that I may no Ways concur in making my Children unhappy. Let neither the Love of Gaming, Intemperance, ill Company, Entertainments, Vanity, or Sports; let no Neglect, Projects, or any Indiſcretion ſo far prevail with me, as to be the Occaſion of bringing Miſery upon my Family. What can an Enemy do worſe than this? And what an unnatural Parent then muſt I be, if I take this Part upon me, and even make that my Entertainment, which muſt make thoſe miſerable, whom, by the ſtricteſt Duty, I am bound to ſupport and comfort! Deliver me, O merciful God, from being thus wretched, and ſuffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to fall into this Sin, which, as Thou thyſelf haſt already judged and publiſhed it, makes a Chriſtian worſe than a Heathen.

Preſerve me likewiſe, O God, from running into the other Extreme, of preparing my Children for Unhappineſs, by being too ſolicitous to make them great. Rather, O Lord, let me be contented with what is moderate, more deſirous to put my Children in Circumſtances for living good Chriſtians, than appear great; and never let me diſable myſelf from doing Good in my Generation, upon the Project of making unreaſonable Additions to their Fortune.

Direct me, O God, in all other Particulars that can contribute to the Chriſtian Education

of

of my Children, and help me in diſcerning and avoiding all that can be injurious to them. Take from me all hurtful Partiality, which does Miſchief on both Sides; and no leſs, with the Injuſtice of its Favours, than its Frowns; and grant me ſuch Moderation, as never to be tired in the Endeavours for doing them good; and never to give them ſuch Diſcouragements or unreaſonable Uneaſineſs, as to put them upon raſh Methods for the Remedy of the Trouble they find at Home.

Remember, O Father Almighty, that Thou art a Father to them; and ſince I am ſo weak, who am deputed by Thee, to have the immediate Care and Government of them, mercifully ſupply by thy Goodneſs whatever is wanting in me. Let thy Grace always attend them, preſerving them from Evil, and directing them to all Good. Confirm them againſt the Corruption of the World and of Sin; deliver them from all Effects of a vain and inconſtant Mind: Give them Diſcretion to avoid all Snares, and to chooſe that which is beſt; and in all their Undertakings be Thou a Bleſſing to them, this Day and for ever; that living here thy faithful Children, they may come at length to that Inheritance which Chriſt has purchaſed for them. *Amen.*

For Huſband or Wife.

O God, who has ordained this State, in which I am engaged, give me Grace to comply with all the Obligations of it, and help me

me to perform them in ſuch a Manner, that in every one I may ſhew I have a Faith in Thee, and am not an Unbeliever.

Preſerve my Love undefiled; let it not be governed by any Paſſion, but be wholly ſubject to Reaſon; to that Reaſon which is governed by Thee. Preſerve me in this Love, which is a Duty; and let this help to carry me, with Comfort, thro' all the Obligations and Difficulties of my State.

Give me, O God, a true, ſolid Diſcretion, that I may know how to manage all Circumſtances for the beſt.

Give me a true Love for Peace, and ſuch a diſcreet Compliance as to reſign my own Inclination and Ways for keeping it.

Give me a true Humility and Patience, that I may ſubmit to, and bear all, in the Manner as thy Apoſtle requires.

Furniſh me, O God, with all other Helps, that whatever my Difficulties be, I may ſtill go on, with Chearfulneſs, ſatisfying the Duties of my State, and never ſo far yield to any Weakneſs, Impatience, or ill Humour, as to weaken, much leſs break the Bond which Thou haſt ſanctified.

For this End, O God, may I at all Times remember, but eſpecially when inclined to any Uneaſineſs, how religiouſly this Bond ought to be kept; ſince it has no leſs than Thee, my God, for its Author: Since Thou haſt laid thy ſtrictest Commands for ſo keeping it, and I have tied myſelf to this Obligation by a moſt ſolemn Vow, undertaken in thy Preſence, having

having both God and Man Witnesses of the Engagement I have made.

This being my Case, grant, O God, I may be ever mindful of this my great Obligation; may the Greatness of it make me afraid of transgressing it; may thy Commands sweeten all the Difficulties of it; and when Impatience begins to raise Disquiets, may I resolutely suppress them, upon the Reflection that it is Thou, O Lord, who hast commanded me to be patient under the Uneasiness of my State, and I have Thee for the Witness and Reward of whatever I patiently suffer, in Obedience to thy Will, and in Compliance with the Promise I have made.

Upon this same Consideration, may I at all times have a Sense how great my Unworthiness, nay, how great my Sin must be, if, after such strict Engagements, I let every trifling Occasion, every little Humour, or slight Contradiction, be enough to raise Disputes, fill all with Heats, and break the Bond of Peace. For since I ought to have more Patience than this with every Neighbour; and every Quarrel, upon such inconsiderable Grounds, must be set down as sinful; much more must it be so here, where the Obligations of Love and Peace are so much stricter.

Grant therefore, O merciful Lord, that my Patience may be proportioned to my Duty, and that I may be here more watchful against all Disputes, where Thou hast laid the strictest Command of keeping Peace. In order to this, help me, I beseech Thee, in governing my inward Motions, my Passions and my Words;

help

me to perform them in such a Manner, that in every one I may shew I have a Faith in Thee, and am not an Unbeliever.

Preserve my Love undefiled; let it not be governed by any Passion, but be wholly subject to Reason; to that Reason which is governed by Thee. Preserve me in this Love, which is a Duty; and let this help to carry me, with Comfort, thro' all the Obligations and Difficulties of my State.

Give me, O God, a true, solid Discretion, that I may know how to manage all Circumstances for the best.

Give me a true Love for Peace, and such a discreet Compliance as to resign my own Inclination and Ways for keeping it.

Give me a true Humility and Patience, that I may submit to, and bear all, in the Manner as thy Apostle requires.

Furnish me, O God, with all other Helps, that whatever my Difficulties be, I may still go on, with Chearfulness, satisfying the Duties of my State, and never so far yield to any Weakness, Impatience, or ill Humour, as to weaken, much less break the Bond which Thou hast sanctified.

For this End, O God, may I at all Times remember, but especially when inclined to any Uneasiness, how religiously this Bond ought to be kept; since it has no less than Thee, my God, for its Author: Since Thou hast laid thy strictest Commands for so keeping it, and I have tied myself to this Obligation by a most solemn Vow, undertaken in thy Presence, having

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help me in bearing what is not agreeable to my own Inclination or Way; in paſſing by ordinary Provocations, and in contriving and uſing all Means of Moderation and Sweetneſs, for gaining ſuch Points as there is Reaſon to gain. And as for giving any Sort of Provocation, grant me, O God, ſuch Government of myſelf, as never to do this; but to chuſe rather to deny myſelf, than to give any Occaſion of Miſunderſtanding or Difference.

In all other Particulars, be Thou a Helper to me: Thou, who knoweſt all my Circumſtances, aſſiſt me according to my Weakneſs and my Wants. Give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, that I may never do any Thing contrary to the Faith I have given, nor take any ſuch Ways, as muſt be either injurious or afflicting to thoſe, to whom I ought to be a Comfort. And as for all the Duties and Difficulties of my State, grant, I may be faithful and untired under them; doing and ſuffering whatever comes to my Lot, with ſuch a true Submiſſion to thy Will, that both in Peace and Trouble, in eaſy and uneaſy Ways, I may remember to make the beſt Uſe of what is thy Pleaſure or Permiſſion, and in all Extreams ſtill labour to work out my Salvation.

For Widows.

O God, the Diſpoſer of all Things, who haſt been pleaſed to bring me into this State, give me Grace this Day, that I may bear all the Troubles of it with Patience, make Uſe of all the Advantages of it with Chriſtian Pru-

Prudence, and with Fidelity perform all the Duties belonging to it.

Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all Lightneſs and Indiſcretion, and ſo mercifully direct me, as to do nothing, that may give Offence, or be unbecoming my State. Rather, O Lord, as thou knoweſt it beſt for me, teach me to be a Widow indeed. Teach me to improve the Opportunity, Thou haſt given me, for ſecuring to my ſelf a happy Eternity.

I muſt confeſs, O God, my Circumſtances are ſuch, as have a great Advantage in them, in order to everlaſting Life. I have ſeen what the World is, and am convinced of its Vanities; I have had earthly Comforts, and having found their Uncertainty, ſee there is nothing in this World, that can ſecure Reſt to a Soul: And now, upon this Experience, my Heart is at Liberty, for ſeeking thoſe better Goods, which alone can make a Soul happy, and being above the Reach of Time, are both ſolid and unchangeable.

Grant O Lord, I beſeech Thee, I may make the beſt Uſe of this Liberty, in turning my Heart wholly upon ſeeking thoſe everlaſting Goods: And as long as I ſhall abide here in this Pilgrimage, give me Grace to employ my Time in ſuch Exerciſes of Piety, Charity and ſolid Devotion, as may engage thy Mercy to me, and be the moſt effectual for coming to the Poſſeſſion of that Happineſs, which I deſire.

And one daily Buſineſs, O God, may it be of my whole Life, to conſider my paſt Sins, Fol-

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In this Method, O God, of a true Converſion, may I now every Day give Encouragement to the Moderation of the Goſpel, in an humble Dreſs, in a frugal Table, in a retir'd Life, in a regular Diſcipline, in ſlender Attendance, and in cutting off from every Part of my paſt Life, whatever I can apprehend, with impartial Reaſon, to have been the Indulgence of a corrupt Appetite, vicious Self-love, or a vain extravagant World. Thus may I labour to do Right to the Goſpel, for the Injury I have done, in joining with the World againſt it, and giving Authority to ſuch Ways, as are contrary to what is preſcrib'd there to the Followers of Jeſus. This, O bleſſed Lord, I muſt acknowledge a Duty. For ſince Juſtice obliges me to make what Satisfaction I can, for the Injury I have at any Time done to others: By a ſtricter Tye of Juſtice, I muſt be certainly bound to make all the Satisfaction I am able, for the Injury I have done to the Goſpel, to the Souls of my Neighbours, and to the Blood of Jeſus, inſomuch as I have eſpous'd a Cauſe contrary, or prejudical to thoſe great Purpoſes of Mercy, for which Jeſus ſhed his ſacred Blood.

And may this ſame Juſtice carry me on, O God, for doing Right to my own Soul. As far as I have injur'd it by indulging immoderate Sleep;

Sleep; may I now recompence this Wrong, by being more watchful. As far as I have injur'd it by accuſtoming it to Vanity, to Idleneſs, or dangerous Entertainments; may I now make Reſtitution, by retrenching all that is reproveable in theſe Ways, and lead it on in the Ways of an humble, active and exemplary Life. As many Hours, as I have given to Folly, may I now give to Prayer and other Exerciſes, which are for making Approaches towards thee. May I endeavour by Charity, to make amends for all, that I have ſinfully, idly or prodigally miſpent. By Recollection and the Practices of an univerſal Charity, may I make Atonement for all the Time I have loſt, and thus in all other Particulars may I obſerve the Rules of Juſtice, and induſtriouſly repair whatever Prejudice my Soul has ſuffer'd thro' my Fault.

Hear my Prayer, O God; and now from this Day, may the whole Method of my Life be regulated by the Goſpel; may I ſtudy to improve my preſent Circumſtances in order to eternal Life; Strengthen me againſt all Dangers; let thy Heavenly Light direct me, for avoiding Snares; let Prudence have the Government of whatever belongs to me: And thus, O God, may my Loſs be my Advantage, and under thy Protection may I find greater Comforts, than what the World affords. Accompany me, I beſeech Thee, O God, and let thy Grace help me under all my Weakneſs.

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For Thoſe who live a Single Life.

O Bleſſed Redeemer, who, both by thy ſelf and thy Apoſtles, haſt commended this State, aſſiſt me with thy holy Grace, this Day, that I may duly conſider the Advantages of it, and likewiſe make uſe of them, in order to eternal Life.

Direct me, I beſeech Thee, this Day, that I may avoid all Snares; and give me Diſcretion, not to expoſe my ſelf to any ſuch Circumſtances, as can be either hurtful to me, or unbecoming. Let this, O God, be thy Mercy to me, becauſe of my great Infirmity.

Help me likewiſe, O merciful Lord, in ſeeking and obtaining thy Perfection, which is peculiar to this State. Thy Apoſtle has told me; that the unmarried Perſon *careth for the Things of the Lord*, and to be *Holy both in Body and Spirit*; and is in the beſt Circumſtances, for *attending on the Lord without Diſtraction.*

Theſe are the greateſt Advantages that can be deſired in this Life. For being created for Eternity, what can be more deſirable, than to be in the beſt Circumſtances of caring and providing for Eternity? And our greateſt Danger of Miſcarriage being from the Diſtractions of this World; what better State can be propoſed, than that, which gives Opportunity of *attending upon the Lord without Diſtraction?*

Wherefore I render Thee Thanks, O bleſſed Lord, for the preſent happy Circumſtances of my Life; and I beſeech Thee, ſo to help me by thy Grace, that I may make uſe of them, in ſuch a Manner, as to find the good Effects

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Grant, O Jeſus, that in this Liberty, which I have, I may turn my Heart to the ſeeking of the Things that are above, that I may learn to deſpiſe what the World moſt admires, and have my Heart and Deſires as much diſengaged from its Satisfactions, Follies and Vanities, as the Condition of my State is.

Grant, that being at Liberty from thoſe great Engagements, which are attended with endleſs Solicitude, and enſlave the Minds of Men to the Earth, I may make a good Uſe of this my Privilege, in ſeeking and ſerving Thee, my God, with greater Freedom of Spirit; while others therefore are buſy about the World, have their Minds diſſipated with Care and Confuſion; while their Concern for Earth is ever breaking in, with Violence, upon their moſt recollected Thoughts; may it be my Comfort to enjoy Thee, in the peaceable Retirement of an undiſturbed Mind, and to rejoice in the little Share I have in a troubleſome World, which in its general Corruption is an Enemy to Thee, and in its moſt lawful Concerns is a Hindrance to all thoſe Exerciſes, by which we are to come to the Poſſeſſion of Thee.

This Freedom therefore, O God, I acknowledge to be a great Bleſſing, which ought to bring forth good Fruit in me: I confeſs it to be a Talent of Value, for which I ſhall be call'd to account, if it be not improved to my eternal Good and thy Glory. Help me therefore, I beſeech

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Grant, O Jeſus, that in this Liberty, which I have, I may turn my Heart to the ſeeking of the Things that are above, that I may learn to deſpiſe what the World moſt admires, and have my Heart and Deſires as much diſengaged from its Satisfactions, Follies and Vanities, as the Condition of my State is.

Grant, that being at Liberty from thoſe great Engagements, which are attended with endleſs Solicitude, and enſlave the Minds of Men to the Earth, I may make a good Uſe of this my Privilege, in ſeeking and ſerving Thee, my God, with greater Freedom of Spirit; while others therefore are buſy about the World, have their Minds diſſipated with Care and Confuſion; while their Concern for Earth is ever breaking in, with Violence, upon their moſt recollected Thoughts; may it be my Comfort to enjoy Thee, in the peaceable Retirement of an undiſturbed Mind, and to rejoice in the little Share I have in a troubleſome World, which in its general Corruption is an Enemy to Thee, and in its moſt lawful Concerns is a Hindrance to all thoſe Exerciſes, by which we are to come to the Poſſeſſion of Thee.

This Freedom therefore, O God, I acknowledge to be a great Bleſſing, which ought to bring forth good Fruit in me: I confeſs it to be a Talent of Value, for which I ſhall be call'd to account, if it be not improved to my eternal Good and thy Glory. Help me therefore, I beſeech

Thee, in ſatisfying this Obligation: Suffer me not to neglect this thy Gift, which is ſo improveable; but ſo direct and ſtrengthen me by thy Grace, that having choſen Thee for my Spouſe, I may leave all for Thee, I may love Thee with all my Heart, I may deſire Thee with all my Soul, I may adore Thee with all my Strength: And in this Method of Charity become Holy both in Body and Spirit.

Aſſiſt me, O merciful Redeemer, in thus improving my Talent; becauſe if, under this Privilege of my State, I am not thus induſtrious: If I either engage my Heart in the Follies of the World, or am conceited of the vain Opinion of my ſelf, or live a careleſs, tepid, or ſlothful Life, I can expect nothing better, than to be ſhut out with the unprofitable Servant. This Thou, O Lord, haſt taught me, in declaring, that there are Fooliſh Virgins, as well as Wiſe; that thoſe are Fooliſh, who permit careleſs Delays in providing for Eternity; and that ſuch, as are thus Fooliſh, ſhall be ſhut out, and hear that Anſwer of Terror from the Bridegroom; *I know ye not.*

O Jeſus, ſuffer me not to be one of thoſe; ſuffer me not to be thus fooliſh, in neglecting the great Opportunities Thou haſt given me, for working out my Salvation: But let the Method of my Life be anſwerable to the Conveniencies of my State. Help me in being Wiſe; help me in providing Oil in my Lamp, and in ſtanding prepared for thy Summons. O Jeſus, to thy Protection I recommend my ſelf; I deſire my Life may be ſanctified

fied in thy Service; I deſire to become a Sacrifice to Thee. Aſſiſt, me, I beſeech Thee, in the Execution of my Deſires; ſupport me under all my Weakneſs; defend me againſt all Snares, both of the Devil, and of the World, and of my own Corruption; preſerve me from Indiſcretion and Raſhneſs, and from all the Dangers of a light and inconſtant Mind; ſecure me againſt ill Advice; take from me all Fondneſs of whatever flatters the Senſes, and of all earthly Goods; let me admire nothing, that is vain and empty; give me a Dread of all that is dangerous; and let the great and prevailing Object of my Love, Affections and Deſires, be in Thee alone. Thus, O God, may I live, thus may I die. Grant this, O Jeſus, through the Merits of thy ſacred Paſſion: Hear my Prayer, and make me thy true Diſciple.

For Such as are in their youthful Years, or Others, who live an idle Life.

O God, here in thy Preſence, I acknowledge my great Weakneſs, which expoſes me to many Indiſcretions, Follies and Sins, and I confeſs my Danger to be ſuch, that I can have no Safety, but from thy Protection. Take me therefore, I beſeech Thee, this Day into thy Care; prevent in me the Miſchiefs of all my own Infirmities, by thy heavenly Grace, and let no Evil have Power over me.

Moderate in me, O God, the Love of the World, and of all its entertaining Vanities. Let Faith have that continual Influence upon my Soul, as to repute the World, with all its admired Charms, no better than Vanity and Affliction of Spirit. Let my Heart be ever under this Conviction; that whatever I admire upon Earth, whatever I desire, is all deceitful and treacherous; that it has no lasting Being, passes away like a Shadow, is hastening to Corruption, and shall soon end in Rottenness or Dust.

Hence, O God, instead of admiring, may I learn to despise what, in itself, is thus contemptible; and by this Contempt, endeavour to correct the Perverseness of my own Inclinations, and break the Force of the most violent Assaults. Hence, O God, may I begin to condemn my own Folly and Blindness, in placing my Satisfaction in Things so perishable, base, and superficial: may I blush at my own Madness, and be confounded to see, for what poor Things I throw away my Soul, and forsake Thee, my God.

Ah, my God! How long shall I go on thus blind and mad! How long shall I go on with the Faith of Eternity, and lay aside the Concern of this, to run after Butter-flies and Smoke! I was created for an everlasting Life to come, and for the Possession of Thee, my God: For this End was I brought into this World, that, in this short Life, I might work out my Salvation, and prepare for the

Hour

Hour of my Death, when I ſhall be called to enter into Eternity. And what is it I do? O my God! What is it I do? I am ſtudying every Day to pleaſe my ſelf, and am earneſt in ſeeking preſent Satisfactions: but as for preparing for Death and Eternity; theſe are the Things I leaſt think of; and when I do think of them, I find I am every Day leſs prepared for them.

For what is my Life, but a Life of Idleneſs and Vanity; a Life of Sloth and Self-love; a Life of Appetite, Sleep, Dreſſing, Gaming, Divertiſements and unprofitable Company; a Life ſpent in courting the World and myſelf? This is my innocent Part: And what are all my Sins? And is this the Way of preparing to appear before Thee, my God, and entering into Eternity?

O Jeſus! Thou haſt told me the Fate of the unprofitable Servant, and of the Tree found without Fruit. And what then muſt my Expectation be, if now I ſhould be ſummoned into Eternity? What can I expect, but to be an everlaſting Companion of Devils, and to be ſubject to the endleſs Rack of having the immoderate Love of Creatures, joined with an eternal Separation from them!

O God, I ſee the unreaſonable Folly of my Life, and I confeſs it before Thee: I ſee my ſelf miſerable and loſt, if I go on in this Way; if I do not labour to renounce all my Evils, and begin to be a new Creature. Help me therefore, O God, in this Taſk, and tho' rendered very difficult, thro' my own Fault;

yet grant, I beſeech Thee, I may undertake it without Delay; that I may begin this very Day; that I may purſue it with Reſolution, carry it on with Courage, and finiſh it with Comfort.

I know I am very weak for ſo great a Work; but, O God, thy Grace is ſufficient for me. Thy Grace is able to carry me through all my Difficulties; and thou haſt manifeſted both thy Power and Goodneſs, in great Numbers of Souls, who have been drawn out of the Depth of Sin, and become faithful in thy Service. Let this ſame Mercy therefore teach me alſo, O God; for it is in this alone I put all my Truſt.

For this End I come here a Petitioner this Day, and moſt humbly beſeech Thee to work this great Change in my Soul. Change all my Inclinations, O God, and let me no longer have a Value for what is ſinful or vain. Let me no longer be bent upon what is ſenſual, idle, or unprofitable; but give me a Reliſh, O merciful Lord, of ſuch Exerciſes as are more becoming the Chriſtian Character, and may be ſerviceable for my eternal Good.

Quicken my Faith, I beſeech Thee, that my Deſires may be rais'd above that which is Earthly; that I may no more place my Satisfaction in Filth or Folly; that I may not daily gratify my Humour or Senſes to the Ruin of my Soul; that I may not pleaſe my ſelf with what is diſpleaſing to Thee; that I may not make my ſelf my own Idol,

and

and ſacrifice both thy Law and all that belongs to Eternity, to the doing my own Will, in the Accompliſhment of my corrupt Deſires.

Let there be no more of This, for thou art my God; and as I own it my Duty, ſo I know it my greateſt Intereſt to ſerve Thee. Confirm me in this Knowledge, and ſtrengthen me in the Practice of it. Give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, to decline all Occaſions of Evil; to avoid ill Company, and to chuſe ſuch as may be an Inſtruction to me in Good. Direct me, O God, to ſuch as are proper to adviſe me in what is beſt, and help me in following their Advice. Deliver me from all Lightneſs and Inconſtancy of Mind; ſtand by me in reſiſting Temptations; take from me all Preſumption in my own Strength, and ſuffer me not through Raſhneſs to run into Danger. *Laſtly*, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, O God, to have regard to my extreme Weakneſs; and ſince I muſt neceſſarily meet with great Difficulties, Snares and Temptations in what I now propoſe, help me, O merciful Father, give me Strength and Courage according to my Neceſſities, and through thy Grace may I perſevere to the End.

For young Perſons, yet under their Parents Care.

O Eternal Father, who haſt commanded us to be obedient to our Parents, and made this the firſt Command of Promiſe, for our

our Encouragement: Mercifully grant, that I may never do any thing contrary to this Precept, but be faithful in the Performance of all that it enjoins, and thus hope to receive the Bleſſing of Thee, my Father, in Heaven.

Preſerve in me, I beſeech Thee, that Love which is due to my Parents; and may this have that conſtant Influence upon me, as to oblige me at all Times, to pay them that Reſpect, Honour, and Obedience, as Thou, O God, haſt commanded me.

Upon this Motive, may I be ever tender of them, and ſolicitous to pleaſe them: May I be always ready to yield to their Inclinations, to comply with their Ways, and to obſerve their Orders. For this End, O God, I beſeech Thee to take from me all Stubbornneſs, Sowerneſs, Fondneſs of my own Thoughts and Ways. Let me never contradict them, or ſo diſpute againſt their Propoſals, as to make them uneaſy; but in all lawful Things may it be my daily Practice, rather to keep Silence, and deny my own Inclinations, than give them any Trouble, by contending about them.

And as Thou, O God, haſt put Parents over me, for my Direction and Help; ſo may I always make them of my Counſel, conſulting with them, in all whatever belongs to me. May I never give ear to any who teach me to undervalue my Parents, or to deſpiſe their Advice; but grant, I may be ever afraid of ſuch Propoſals, and avoid thoſe who thus undertake to make me a Rebel againſt thy expreſs Law, and deprive me of thy Bleſſing.

Hence-

Henceforth, O God, I beſeech Thee, may I be ever under the Protection of thy Grace, ſo as never to become the Grief of my Parents, by following ill Company, or taking evil Ways, or expoſing myſelf to the Danger of departing from thoſe pious Principles in which they have educated me. No, my God, preſerve me, if it be thy bleſſed Will, from the Sin of bringing the worſt of Afflictions upon my Parents, and becoming their Perſecutor: For I muſt acknowledge, if ever I prove thus unnatural, I muſt renounce all Hopes in Thee, and look upon myſelf no better than a Reprobate. Help me, therefore, O merciful Father, and by thy powerful Grace, ſecure me againſt this wretched State.

Help me likewiſe in all other Particulars, that on no Account I may fall under the Character which thou haſt given of the *fooliſh Son*, who is *a Grief to his Father, and Bitterneſs to her that bare him.* Rather, O God, may I be a Comfort to them, and in all Ways ſtudy to be their Support; ſo to make ſome Return for all the Care, Trouble and Love they have had for me. And this may I never omit, even in their old Age, but continue with the Addition of ſuch Relief as they ſhall want, and lies in my Power to give. I beſeech Thee, that I may never ſhew any Impatience at their Infirmities, much leſs, mock at any Weakneſs to which they may be ſubject; becauſe this is a Sin againſt which Thou haſt declared thy Diſpleaſure.

In

In this Manner, O God, may I go on all my Life, and never ſuffer any Change of Circumſtances to take me from my Duty. In this one Thing only I deſire an Exception; to diſſent from my Parents, when they encourage me to any Thing which Thou haſt forbidden, or forbid me to do what Thou haſt commanded. In theſe Caſes, I humbly beg thy Grace to be faithful to Thee, my heavenly Father, and to chuſe rather to forſake Father and Mother, and forfeit all worldly Conveniencies, than to depart from Thee; ſince 'tis only upon this Condition I can be thy Diſciple. Help me, O bleſſed God, and, by thy Grace direct me this Day in every Thing belonging to my Duty; and grant, that in nothing I may offend my Parents on Earth, nor Thee my Father who art in Heaven.

For the Rich.

MOST bountiful Lord, I acknowledge Thee my Benefactor: I return Thee Thanks for whatever I poſſeſs, and I heartily beg thy Grace, that this Day, I may make a good Uſe of whatever Plenty, through thy Mercy, I enjoy.

Wherefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, that this Day I may ſo far govern myſelf, as to ſpend nothing in Favour of any vicious or ſinful Inclination, nor ſuffer any prodigal or extravagant Humour to have the Command of my Purſe: Nay, one Thing farther I aſk, that I may be deaf to all the Demands of expenſive

expenſive Vanity, Gaming, Appetite and Idleneſs; and put a ſtop to all thoſe Ways by which I have hitherto miſpent what Thou haſt entruſted with me.

O God, how great has been my Sin in this Way! And what ought my Confuſion to be, when I look, back and ſee how little I have correſponded with the Deſigns of thy Goodneſs, in the Plenty which Thou haſt depoſited in my Hands! ſince I can ſcarce ſay with Truth, that I have ever duly conſider'd the Account I am to give to Thee of what I have received, but have inconſiderately left it to the Diſpoſal of as many Paſſions or Humours as I have had to call for it; as if to feed and ſatisfy theſe had been one principal End, for which it had been given me.

Unhappy Sinner that I am! Who can number the many Sins I have fallen into by this my Prodigality and Ill-management? How ſhall I appear, when I am called to give an Account of my Stewardſhip? How ſhall I make Atonement for this intolerable Waſte of the Goods of my Lord; and for turning his Favours to the Service of Idleneſs, Vanity and Sin?

I ſee plainly the Injuſtice and Impiety of what I have done; I confeſs my Ingratitude; I own the unhappy State of my Soul, through my manifold Sins; and I moſt heartily beſeech Thee, to fill my Heart with ſuch a ſeaſonable Confuſion for my Folly, as from this Moment, never to think of it, but with Horrour,

rour, and never more to ſuffer the Return of it.

Teach me, therefore, O God, to conſider the Uſe I am to make of what I have received from Thee; that I am not the Maſter of it, but only the Steward; that I am to give an Account to Thee of what thou haſt left with me in Truſt: Imprint this Principle, I beſeech Thee, and fix it immoveable in my Heart, that I may no more ſacrifice, what I have in my Care, to Inclination and to the World; but bring all my Expences to be examined, how far they are agreeable to thy Will, and anſwer thoſe Ends, for which Thou haſt depoſited ſuch Plenty in my Hands.

I know it is thy Will, I ſhould be ready to ſupply my own Neceſſities, and of thoſe who belong to me: Thou alloweſt me to provide for the common Conveniencies of Life, and for all that Health and a prudent Decency requires; as likewiſe to make a Proviſion for their comfortable Well-being, who have received their Being from me. So far, O God, Thou wilt receive in Accounts.

Beſides this, I have thy expreſs Orders for ſupplying, out of my Plenty, the Neceſſities of ſuch as are in Want. For this I have thy Command; and, as thoſe who obſerve it not (who *feed not the Hungry, nor cloath the Naked*, &c.) are to be placed on the Left-hand of the Judge, and condemned eternally; ſo thoſe, who obey thy Orders in giving Alms, have in this a powerful Means of finding Mercy with Thee.

Grant

Grant therefore, I beſeech Thee, I may ever have this Command before my Eyes, and be always mindful, how very much my Eternity depends on it; my Salvation on the Obſervance, and Damnation on the Neglect of it. Grant I may ever have Compaſſion for ſuch as are in Diſtreſs, and look upon my Plenty, as that, which Thou haſt left with me for their Help: And yet much more for my own, whilſt in giving Relief to them for thy Sake, and in Obedience to thy Commands, I lay up for myſelf a Treaſure in Heaven, which will be much more my Comfort, than all that I hoard up here unneceſſarily, or ſpend unprofitably.

O God, this is a great Mercy, that in the good Uſe of ſuch Droſs, Thou haſt provided me with ſuch effectual Means for making me eternally happy. Grant now, I beſeech Thee, this one Petition, that for the Time that yet remains of my Life, I may be ſo wiſe, as to make this good Uſe of it. Grant me this true Wiſdom and Strength of Mind, that I may no more let Prodigality or Intemperance, Vanity or Idleneſs, devour what belongs to the Poor; that I may not make that the unneceſſary Ornament of my Houſe, or Cloathing of my Walls, which, if applied to cloathing the Naked, might help to ſet me on the Right-hand of the Judge: That I may not give to Curioſity what might be the Comfort of the Fatherleſs and Widow; nor to a luxuriant Table, that, which might give Life to ſuch as are periſhing for Want of Neceſſaries;

ceſſaries; nor to idle Entertainments, what might be the Support of ſinking Families.

Too great, O God, has been my Guilt in this manifold Waſte: But now mercifully hear me, and let it be ſo no more; let me now lay up for Heaven, who have waſted ſo much upon Duſt and Earth. Let me now every Day conſider what I can ſpare; and not conſult with Vanity, Idleneſs or Folly upon this Point; ſince very much may be ſpar'd, where theſe pretend Want. By theſe I have been hitherto deceived; may I therefore now be afraid of whatever they ſuggeſt, and be more ſerious, where Eternity is concern'd, than to take theſe for my Guides, who never knew the Way to Heaven, but have led Millions into Hell. Far be it from me, O God, to take ſuch for my Adviſers.

Deliver me likewiſe from all other Snares, from Covetouſneſs and the Love of Riches. Theſe are great Judgments, and I have thy Word for it; That they lead into great Temptations, into hurtful Deſires, and drown Men in Perdition. Preſerve me therefore, and according to my Weakneſs, which is known to Thee, mercifully afford me help. I cannot but fear, ſince my Circumſtances are declared to be ſo dangerous, and He, who is to be Judge of all Men, has ſolemnly publiſh'd the great Difficulty there is of Salvation for ſuch as are Rich. Help me therefore, O God, and as Thou knoweſt thy Grace to be neceſſary for me, ſo afford me Help; I ſee how eaſy it is to abuſe thy Gifts;

Gifts; I have Cuſtom to incline me to it; Authority to encourage me in it; Example and Preſcription to plead for it; and the whole World, like a Torrent, carrying me on in this ſinful Practice; and my only Help, for ſtanding againſt this Power, is from thy Grace.

Wherefore I beſeech Thee, give me this Grace, that in the Uſe of Money, I may obſerve ſuch Rules as come neareſt to thy Holy Will, and to the Goſpel which I profeſs; for thus only ſhall I be able to give an Account of what I have received. And as for the World, if it approves not the Method, let it paſs its Cenſures as it pleaſes; for I here declare my Sentiments, and heartily deſire they may be always mine: I had rather be the Subject of its Reproaches, for ſo doing well, than have its Applauſes, for complying with ſuch unwarrantable Ways, as it better approves.

For all ſuch Profeſſions as live by Gain.

O God, who, in Puniſhment of Sin, haſt commanded us to take Pains for a Livelihood, give a Bleſſing to my Endeavours this Day, and grant that what I undertake may be attended with Succeſs.

Let me live this Day in thy holy Fear, and may thy Grace ſo direct me, as to do nothing that is unlawful, upon the Proſpect of making any Advantage by it. Let no Deſire of Gain ſo prevail with me, as to propoſe

propoſe or do any thing that is unjuſt: Since whatever my Gain be, I ſhall certainly provoke thy Diſpleaſure, and be a Loſer by it.

Grant I may be faithful, in whatever I undertake, in Behalf of my Neighbour; I may exactly perform all Covenants and Contracts, and never contrive Ways to encreaſe his Charges, or to be a Gainer by his Loſs.

Give me ſuch powerful Grace as never to defraud, over-reach, or do wrong to my Neighbour, nor to uſe any ſuch Ways by which he may be impoſed upon, and led into Deceit. Thou haſt forbidden all this to thy Followers, declared it to be an Abomination to Thee, and that Thou wilt be *the Avenger of all ſuch* as do theſe Things: For that *He, that doth Wrong, ſhall receive for the Wrong he hath done; and there is no Reſpect of Perſons.* Nay, Thou haſt ſaid, that thoſe who do Wrong, and defraud, are Unrighteous; and, *that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Deliver me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, from following ſuch Ways: For what Comfort can there be in ſuch Gain, which draws thy certain Judgments upon me, and ſhuts me out from the Kingdom of Heaven? What will it profit me, if I gain the whole World, and loſe my Soul? O God, what a ſad Exchange then will it be, if, for leaving a little more behind me, when I die, I loſe Thee, my God, for all Eternity! To what Purpoſe is my Faith, my Hope, my Prayer, and all my Profeſſion of Religion, if I go on in

ſuch a Way, which Thou haſt declared to be the Way of Damnation! O merciful God, deliver me from all ſuch Blindneſs and Deluſion.

And here, O bleſſed Lord, I beſeech Thee, let me hearken to no deceitful Arguments, in a Caſe where Thou haſt ſpoken ſo very plain. Let not Education prevail; let neither Example, Authority, Cuſtom, nor general Practice have any Power over me: For, what are all theſe, againſt thy Command? Theſe cannot make a Thing lawful, which Thou haſt forbidden; they cannot diſpenſe with thy Laws, but with their Loſs, who accept the Diſpenſation. And, can theſe ſave me, if, for my Diſobedience to thy Laws, Thou ſhutteſt me out of Heaven?

O God, I confeſs they can do nothing, and therefore they ought not to be a Warrant for doing what Thou forbiddeſt; they are only Pretexts to ſerve their Turn who are willing to be deceived; and therefore I moſt heartily beg thy Grace that I may not give ear to them. No, my God, be Thou ever a God to me; let me at all Times hear thy Voice, obſerve thy Precepts, follow thy Law, and renounce all that which undertakes to lead me on in Ways which Thou haſt forbidden, or promiſes Security amidſt all thy Threats; ſince if I renounce not this, I muſt in Fact renounce Thee.

Wherefore, O merciful Lord, hear this my Prayer, and deliver me not up to Blindneſs, or to a reprobate Senſe. Let me rather

ther reſign all worldly Advantages, than ſeek them this Way. Let me rather be contented with a moderate Gain, a ſtrait Fortune, a poor Being, than ſeek to mend my Condition by unjuſt Means. Nay, my God, give me a Spirit to ſubmit to Inconveniencies, to ſtruggle with Neceſſities, to venture a total Ruin, rather than uſe unlawful Ways, for fencing myſelf againſt theſe Miſchiefs. Give me this Spirit, I beſeech Thee, O Lord, that I may never take one Step farther in any worldly Buſineſs, than thy Law will give me Leave. And, if, in following this Method, Thou ſhalt ſo pleaſe that I fall into Trouble, thy Will be done: I ſhall have this Comfort, at leaſt, of Suffering for Juſtice; and I think it much better, to ſuffer all Kinds of Perſecution, upon this Account, than go to the Devil for Help.

This I declare to be my Judgment, and I beg thy Aſſiſtance, that I may always be govern'd by it in all I do. Thus, O God, may I do this Day. Help me in what I now propoſe, and let no Deſire of Gain, nor Fear of worldly Inconvenience, nor the faireſt Opportunities of Injuſtice, have Power to carry me againſt my Duty. Give me Strength and Courage to ſtand the Ground which Juſtice preſcribes, and let thy Bleſſing accompany me in all I do.

For Servants, and Such as live by their Labour.

IT was Thou, O God, the ſupreme Judge of the World, who didſt ordain Labour to be the Puniſhment of Sin, requiring of all the Children of *Adam*, that they ſhould eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brow. From thy Hand I accept the Puniſhment, and confeſs it to be juſt; and, as for that Part which I am to undergo this Day, I ſubmit to it with a willing Mind, acknowledging it to be due to my Sins; and I hope, as it is thy Appointment, ſo it will likewiſe find Acceptance with Thee.

It being juſt then, that Offenders ſhould be puniſh'd, I own myſelf a great Offender; and upon this Conſideration, I offer myſelf to whatever Difficulties I ſhall meet with this Day: I offer myſelf to the Difficulties of my Work; to the Reproofs of thoſe that are over me, whether juſt or unjuſt; to all the Uneaſineſs of their Commands, Humours and Ways; to the Provocations from Equals, and to whatever other Troubles ſhall happen to me this Day: To all theſe I offer myſelf, becauſe I know myſelf a Sinner; and I look upon all theſe as the Execution of thy Juſtice, O God, againſt an Offender. But then, O ſovereign Lord, I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may overcome all my natural Impatience, Paſſions, Fretfulneſs and ill Humour, and receive all the Difficul-

Difficulties of this Day, with the Humility and Patience of an Offender, who knows his Sins to deſerve far greater Puniſhment than what he at preſent ſuffers.

In this Manner, I deſire to undergo all the Uneaſineſs of this Day; but help me Thou, O merciful God, and give me Patience, as my Circumſtances ſhall require; that ſo I may have the Comfort of Suffering as a Chriſtian, and not as a Heathen, who has no Faith in Thee.

That I may obtain thy Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing, behold, to Thee I offer all whatever I am to do or ſuffer this Day. I undertake it in Obedience to thy Will, who requireſt it of me. I acknowledge Thee for my Lord and Maſter; and though I have thy Creatures over me, yet I have thy Commands for what I do; and I ſerve, not as ſerving the Eyes of Men, but as doing the Will of Thee, my God.

Being thus engaged in thy Service, I depend on Thee for whatever Help I ſhall want, for performing the Duties of my Place, and ſupporting the Difficulties of it; for I have a Confidence, Thou wilt help thoſe that ſerve Thee.

Grant me therefore, O God, this neceſſary Grace, that I may be faithful and exact in performing whatever Obligations belong to the Station in which I am. That nothing, which I have undertaken, may be omitted thro' my Forgetfulneſs, or Want of Care; that nothing may be loſt or injured thro' my Neglect; that I may be wanting in no Part, either thro' Sloth,

Sloth, or the Love of Eaſe or Sleep; that I may not waſte any Thing, nor ſpend, or employ what belongs to others, but with the Conſent or Permiſſion of thoſe who are Owners of it; that I may not take any Advantage of what is not mine, but as far as is permitted; much leſs contrive to gain by their Loſs, whom I ſerve: And in this, O God, let not the Love of Intereſt, or the Example of others, or common Practice prevail with me, for doing what is unjuſt.

In theſe Particulars, and all others, be Thou my Helper, O God; and this, not only when I have the Eye of others over me, to witneſs what I do (which is only Eye-Service, and can have no Acceptance with Thee) but I moſt earneſtly implore thy Grace, that I may make a Conſcience of all I do; that I may do all *in Singleneſs of Heart, as unto Chriſt: Not with Eye-Service, as Men-pleaſers, but as the Servant of Chriſt, doing the Will of God from the Heart; with Good-will doing Service, as to the Lord, and not to Men.* This Grace beſtow, O God, on thy Servant; that I may be faithful and careful on all Occaſions. Let it be enough for me, that I may have thy Eye always over me, to witneſs what I do; and, on this Motive, may I be ever ſolicitous to perform my Duty, though I have no other to reprove me; or to call me to an Account.

Grant likewiſe, O Lord, that I may ſhew a ready Obedience to their Commands who are over me, and comply with Chearfulneſs, even when they are diſcompoſed with Paſſion,

or give ſuch Orders as are not pleaſing to me. In ſuch Occaſions may I ſo govern both my Words and Behaviour, as to ſhew no Diſlike, ill Humour, and much leſs Stubbornneſs; and upon no Account may I ever revile, or ſpeak Evil of them behind their Backs.

If they command what is ſinful, or require my Concurrence in what is diſpleaſing to Thee, give me Grace to be faithful to Thee, and to let no worldly Convenience or Intereſt perſuade me to ſuch an unchriſtian Compliance. Rather let me loſe all Advantages of this Life, than purchaſe them by doing what is ſinful.

Let thy Grace likewiſe help me in avoiding all Kind of Sin, this Day, ſo as not wilfully to offend Thee in Words or Actions; not to join with any, who give ill Example, who encourage or invite to what is an Offence againſt thy Law. In this, O God, I beſeech Thee give me Grace and Courage; for what will it profit me, to get a Livelihood by my Labour, if, by doing what is ſinful, I loſe my Soul?

Grant therefore, beſides all other Duties, I may be careful in keeping Peace; that, for this End, I may with Patience bear with the Ways of ſuch as are troubleſome or weak; be ſilent under Provocations, forbear all quarrelſome and reproachful Language; withdraw, when I find my ſelf diſturbed; and, upon no Account, be a Whiſperer, in carrying Stories, or relating to others what has been ſaid of them behind their Backs.

For obſerving theſe Particulars, I aſk thy Grace, O God, becauſe I know how ſtrict thy Command is, of keeping Peace, and of living in Charity with all; and that, if I do it not, I cut my ſelf off from the Hopes of ſeeing thy Face in Heaven.

In theſe, and all other Duties, aſſiſt me, O God, from above, and help me, in overcoming all my uſual Weakneſs. To Thee I conſecrate all my Labours, and beg thy Bleſſing to attend me this Day in all I do.

For Servants, &c. *who have but little Time.*

TO Thee, O God, I offer myſelf, and all the Labours of this Day, and I moſt humbly beg thy Bleſſing to accompany me in all my Undertakings.

I confeſs I am a Sinner, and that Puniſhment is due to my Sins: And therefore I accept of all the Labour and other Troubles that ſhall happen to me this Day, as the Chaſtiſement of my Sins: Grant, O Lord, I may ſuffer it with the Patience of an humble Penitent.

Help me, likewiſe, that I may be faithful in every Duty; that nothing may be loſt or injured through my Neglect; that I may not waſte, or miſpend, or take, or give away, but with the Permiſſion of thoſe whom I ſerve. Grant I may make a Conſcience of being careful in every Part of my Duty, and that I may do all, not with Eye-ſervice, as pleaſing Men, but as ſerving Thee, my God, who art Witneſs of all I do, who requireſt me

to be juſt and faithful, and to whom I muſt give an Account.

Give me likewiſe the Spirit of Obedience, of Humility and Meekneſs; that I may chearfully comply with all lawful Commands; that I may not murmur at any Thing, nor give any diſreſpectful Anſwers, but take all Uneaſineſs with Silence, as from thy Hand, O God, who art a juſt Judge, and may'ſt afflict, exerciſe and puniſh me, as Thou pleaſeſt.

Another Petition I make to Thee, that by thy Grace I may be preſerved from all Sin; that I offend not in my Words or Actions; that I join not with others, in what is Evil; that I give not ill Examples to others, nor yield to others in whatever is injurious to thoſe over me, or cauſes Diſorder in the Family, or is diſpleaſing to Thee.

I aſk again, O God, thy Grace, that this Day I may keep Peace with all; that I may engage in no Quarrel, give no provoking Language, make no Parties, back-bite none, that I may not be the Devil's Meſſenger, in Whiſpering and carrying Stories, which is the Seed of all Diviſion; and if any Provocations are offered me, that I may ſuppreſs all Paſſions, be moderate in my Anſwers, and follow the Goſpel, in doing Good for Evil.

Thus, O God, may I be under thy Protection, this Day; may I walk in the Way of thy Commandments, in avoiding Evil, and doing Good; and then, tho' a poor Servant, I ſhall be happy, in being in thy Favour, who art no

no Reſpect of Perſons. Go along with me, O God, this Day, and be a Bleſſing to me.

For the Poor and Diſtreſſed.

LOOK upon me, O merciful Father, with the Eye of Compaſſion this Day, and take me into thy Protection. Have regard to the difficult Circumſtances of my Life; conſider my great Weakneſs, and give me thy Grace to help me, according to my Neceſſities.

O God, to Thee I bow down, and offer myſelf to receive whatever Difficulties or Troubles ſhall, by thy Appointment, be my Exerciſe this Day; I confeſs Thee to be juſt in all thy Judgments, and that, whatever my Puniſhment be, it is much leſs than my Sins deſerve.

I confeſs again, Thou art Sovereign Lord of all, and I am only a poor Creature. It is juſt thy Will ſhould be done in all Things, and that every Thing ſhould be in thy Creatures, as Thou art pleaſed to order it. Theſe have nothing to do, but to ſubmit, and in Silence to bow down and receive thy Commands, and not only to approve, but alſo to rejoice in the Accompliſhment of thy Will.

Thus, O God, and in this Spirit, I deſire to receive whatever is to be my Portion this Day: Whatever it be, it is moſt certainly thy Will, and let this be enough for me. Only this Grace I beg of Thee, to remember me under all my Trouble, to grant me Patience to ſuffer it, as a Chriſtian, and to refreſh my Soul with inward Comforts.

I own indeed, Nature is unwilling to ſuffer, and deſirous of Relief; this Deſire I lay before Thee, but ſtill ſo, that I reſign myſelf wholly into thy Hands to do in this, as Thou knoweſt beſt for me: Thou art my God, Thy Will be done.

For tho' Suffering be troubleſome, yet I underſtand, it may be more for my Advantage. It is the State which Chriſt choſe for himſelf, and for his Apoſtles, and for infinite others, his beſt and moſt faithful Servants: By this Way he purified their Souls from Corruption, gave them a Diſlike of this World, and prepared them for a Life of Bliſs; and I do not queſtion but this has been a Means of Salvation to many.

Suffering having been thus dignified, and beneficial to ſo many Souls; it may likewiſe be ſo to me; it may be the greateſt of Mercies; even the Way by which I am to work out my Salvation, and much more to the Purpoſe, than all the Peace, Plenty, and Eaſe, which the World affords. As ſuch, O God, I accept it; but help me then, I beſeech Thee, with thy Grace, that I may make a good Uſe of it.

Deliver me from all Murmuring and Impatience, from all Fretfulneſs, Dejection, and deſponding Amuſements; let not my Thoughts be taken up with ſuch unprofitable and even ſinful Entertainments; but let my great and general Concern be, how to bear up with a Chriſtian Spirit under my Trial, and make the beſt Uſe I can of my preſent Sufferings.

May

May this, O God, be my Study; to this one Point may all my Thoughts be turned, as often as my Spirits begin to ſink, or Anguiſh oppreſſes my Soul.

Thus, O merciful Father, may I go on every Day, hoping in thy Goodneſs, that Thou wilt have Compaſſion on this unhappy Clay, and either relieve it, or ſupport it under the Weight Thou art pleaſed to lay upon it. In this Hope I reſt this Day: With the ſame Hope I offer myſelf, this Day, into thy Hands; and, as I heartily deſire Thy Will may be done, ſo I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may with Patience, with Readineſs, with Chearfulneſs and Comfort, embrace the Appointments of thy holy Will, whatever they be.

For bearing the Burthen of the Day.

TO Thee, O Sovereign Lord, who knoweſt what Difficulties and Troubles are to be my Portion this Day, and how little prepared I am, thro' my great Weakneſs, to bear them, to Thee I preſent myſelf, beſeeching Thee to have Compaſſion on thy poor Servant, to ſtretch forth thy Hand of Mercy towards me, this Day; and to give me Grace and Strength, according to my Neceſſities.

I ſolemnly proteſt to Thee, my Lord and my God, that I am troubled at my uſual Impatience; and it is a Grief to me, to find ſuch daily Effects of my Weakneſs, after ſo many repeated Reſolutions of doing better. But behold, my God, I appeal to Thee, to be more faithful to Thee, and to go thro' all the Difficulties of Life, with the Patience, Reſignation

and Peace, as becomes a Diſciple of the Lord Jeſus.

Help me therefore I beſeech Thee, O merciful Father, and leave me not this Day to myſelf; but thro' thy infinite Goodneſs give me Strength, that whatever my Burthen is to be, I may not be ſurprized with Paſſion; I may give no Offence, by my Words or Actions; nor admit of interior Diſquiets, nor of immoderate Solicitude, nor of Melancholy or Dejection, nor give Diſturbance to others, but receive it with a ready Submiſſion to thy holy Will, and go under it with ſuch a compoſed and truly humble Patience, as my Redeemer has taught me, both by Word and Example. Hear this my Petition, O God, and let me have the Comfort this Day, of having carried my Burthen, my Croſs, with Patience, and without offending Thee, my Lord and my God.

For Courage.

O God, who haſt manifeſted thy Power, in ſtrengthening thy Servants under ſo many ſevere Trials, and giving them Courage, not to ſhrink at the greateſt Terrors; ſhew this Mercy to me alſo, tho', thro' my Sins, unworthy of what I aſk; that I may not ſink, nor be dejected or diſcouraged, at whatever Trials I ſhall meet with this Day; but grant I may receive and ſuffer them all, with that true Submiſſion and Conſtancy of Spirit, as to ſhew, whoſe Diſciple I am.

Wherefore I beſeech Thee, by thy Grace to prevent in me all immoderate Fear, Paſſion, Soli-

Solicitude or Diſtruſt; for if I admit of theſe Weakneſſes, I ſhall make no Advantage, but be a Loſer by the Croſs, which Thou ſhalt lay upon me. And though I am very weak, and, upon this Conſideration, have great Reaſon to fear; yet ſtill, O God, raiſe up my Soul with a Confidence in Thee, and with this Hope may I baniſh all Fears from my Breaſt, and ſtand like a true Diſciple unmoved in the Sight of all that is terrible. In this Manner carry me on, O God, this Day; and whatever my Trials are, let me never be tired, but keep up a good Spirit under all the Troubles which ſhall be my Exerciſe.

For Diſcretion.

I Confeſs before Thee, O God, my manifold Weakneſs, and therefore moſt humbly beſeech Thee, by thy Grace, to ſecure me againſt the uſual Effects of it. Grant that this Day I may neither ſpeak nor do any Thing raſhly or unadviſedly, ſo as to offend Thee or my Neighbour, or that can be made an ill Uſe of by any Obſervers, to the Prejudice of myſelf, or others, or of any Cauſe that is good. But ſo direct me, that I may be conſiderate in my Words, Behaviour and Actions, that I may not run into Miſchief, but do all to Edification. *Amen.*

For Perſons under all Neceſſities.

IT being thy Command, O God, that we ſhould pray for one another, and thus practiſe ſome Part of that Charity which our bleſſed Redeemer has ſhewed to us: Hear now my Petitions, I beſeech Thee, in behalf of all thoſe for whom I at preſent come to aſk thy Help.

Have Mercy, O God, on all thoſe who are educated, or otherwiſe engaged in Errors, and lead them to thy Truths: Open their Eyes, I beſeech Thee, and be Thou a Light to them, to conduct their Feet into the Ways of Peace.

Let thoſe have a particular Share in this Mercy who ſincerely ſeek Thee, who ſerve Thee with an upright Heart, and being diſengaged from all worldly Motives, not only deſire to find Thee, but are in full Liberty of Spirit, to follow Thee, wherever thy Light ſhall appear to them.

Relieve thoſe who are perplexed with Doubts of Conſcience, and diſcover thyſelf to them. Let them not conſume their Thoughts in vain, but mercifully direct them to the Choice of ſuch Means, by which they may find a ſolid Peace.

Be Thou a Comforter, O God, to all thoſe who are now labouring under the Agonies of Death; ſtand Thou by them, and mercifully deliver them from all the Snares of the Enemy. Draw their Hearts powerfully to Thee,

Thee, give them a true Repentance, and let the infinite Merits of thy Son's bitter Paſſion keep them above Deſpair. Help them, O God, according to their ſeveral Neceſſities, and ſhew thy ſelf an indulgent Father to them.

Have Compaſſion on all Chriſtians who are Slaves to Infidels: Give them Patience under all their Trials, confirm their Hearts againſt all Temptations, that they may never think of purchaſing their Liberty by renouncing Thee. Shew thyſelf a God to them; as Thou knoweſt their Neceſſities, ſo I beſeech Thee to help them; and teach them to engage thy Goodneſs in their Relief, by being faithful to Thee.

Look upon all thoſe who are in Priſon: Support them, O God, under all their Difficulties; preſerve them from the Contagion of ill Company; raiſe up their Hearts to Thee; ſuffer them not to ſeek Comfort in Sin, nor to make Extravagance and Vice the Relief of their Unhappineſs; but teach them, I beſeech Thee, to ſweeten their Troubles by Patience and Humility, and by a true Submiſſion to thy holy Will; and be Thou, O Lord, their Comforter.

Have Pity on all that are oppreſſed, perſecuted, or ſuffer any Injuſtice: Confirm theſe, O God, with Patience; help them to make a good Uſe of their Sufferings; appear in their Relief, and let them not want thy Comforts.

Regard

Regard all thoſe with Compaſſion, O God, whoſe Circumſtances are ſo hard in this World, that they ſee nothing before them but Poverty, Miſery, or Diſtreſs. Viſit theſe, I beſeech Thee, with thy heavenly Grace, and ſhew thyſelf a Father to them. Teach them to hope in thy Goodneſs, and give them Courage according to the Difficulties of their State. Open the Hearts of ſome of thy faithful Servants for their Relief, and ſtrengthen them againſt all Temptations, which put them upon ſeeking Help out of Thee, renouncing Heaven for Bread.

Have Mercy on all thoſe Heads of Families, who, by Intemperance, Gaming, Prodigality, Neglect, or any other Way, are unnaturally bringing Ruin on themſelves, and on thoſe whom they are bound to ſupport. Give them, O God, Underſtanding to ſee their Wickedneſs; give them Courage and Strength to forſake their evil Ways; and make them zealous in thy Law, that by a new Life they may atone for their paſt Follies, for all the ill Examples and Scandals they have given, and now become the Comforts of their Families.

Let thy Mercy likewiſe reach, O God, to all yet in their youthful Years: Preſerve them from all Raſhneſs and Indiſcretion; keep them from ill Company, and other Dangers; give them a Senſe of their own Weakneſs, and of the many Snares that are before them; convince them of the Vanity of all worldly Charms, and by a Life of Piety may they engage

gage Thee to be their perpetual Guide and Protector. As for ſuch who are now in Danger of being made a Prey, have Compaſſion on them; pardon their Follies, and be thou, O God, their Deliverer. And for thoſe who have taken evil Ways, break all their Bonds, I beſeech Thee; open all their Eyes to ſee their Unhappineſs, and give them Grace to amend.

Again, O God, I implore thy Goodneſs in behalf of all ſinful Chriſtians, ſuch as have unhappily proſtituted themſelves to Vice: Touch their Hearts, and give them a true Senſe of their Miſery; powerfully call them from their Wickedneſs; give them a wholſome Fear of thy Judgments, and may the Knowledge of thy Mercies to returning Sinners encourage them to a ſpeedy Repentance.

Have Mercy on all Sinners, in whatever Way they have departed from Thee, their Creator. Awaken theſe from all their Blindneſs, and ſoften their hardened Hearts: For the Glory of thy Name, have Compaſſion on them, that thy holy Faith may be no more blaſphemed for the Scandals of ſuch Profeſſors; and that Innocence may not have ſo many ill Examples, to lead it out of the Way of Salvation. O God, look down and ſee, how great is the Dexterity of the Chriſtian World, through the general Corruption of all Kinds of Wickedneſs, with which it is over-run: Send Help, I beſeech Thee, and, through thy infinite Goodneſs, reclaim all Sinners from their vicious Ways. O God of Mercy, let

not

not ſo many periſh who have been redeemed by the Blood of thy only Son; but by the Ways of a ſincere Converſion, bring them back to their Duty, that they may for ever bleſs thy Goodneſs, which has ſnatch'd them out of the Jaws of Death.

I recommend likewiſe to thy Goodneſs, O God, all ſuch Chriſtians as lie on the Bed of Sickneſs, or are viſited with Pain. Remember their Weakneſs, I beſeech Thee, and give them Strength according to the Difficulty of their Trials. Forſake them not, O God, in their Diſtreſs, but turn their Hearts to Thee, and hear them, calling upon Thee, in the Day of their Tribulation. Grant, O Father of Mercy, they may not offend Thee by Impatience, nor fall under any Dejection of Mind, but give them Grace to improve under their ſufferings.

Have Regard to ſuch Chriſtians as are ſubject to Melancholy, to Dejection of Spirit, or to any Sort of Oppreſſion. Theſe, O God, are weak, and, being expoſed to many Miſchiefs both of Body and Mind, ſtand in great Need of thy Help. Let their Neceſſities, O God, move Thee to Compaſſion; and give them all that Help which they want; give them Courage under their Evil; give them Diſcretion to manage it, and Patience to bear whatever Part of it they are not able to overcome. O God, behold their unhappy Circumſtances, and let thy Grace direct them into ſuch a Method, as may be moſt effectual for their temporal and eternal Good.

Let

Let thoſe too, O merciful Father, partake of thy ſpeedy Help, who, through the Weight either of their Misfortunes or Sins, begin to loſe their Hope, and are inclining to Deſpair. Raiſe up thoſe ſinking Souls, I beſeech Thee, and let the comforting Light of thy Goodneſs and Mercy ſhine upon them. Revive their Spirits with thy Promiſes, and let them have ſuch Supports of thy Grace, that they may at preſent confeſs that Thou art their God. Hear my Prayer, O bleſſed Lord, in behalf of theſe unhappy Souls; defend them from the Aſſaults of the Enemy, and ſuffer them not to periſh through his Snares, but with a firm Hope teach them to reſt in Thee.

Have Mercy, O God, on all States and Conditions of Chriſtians, and according to their ſeveral Neceſſities, ſo, I beſeech Thee, let them find thy Help. Help all Virgins, all thoſe who live a ſingle Life, eſtabliſh their Hearts againſt all Snares, and teach them to make a good Uſe of the Advantage they have in being diſengaged from the World. Help all that are in a married State; give them Diſcretion and Patience for the good Management of their preſent Circumſtances: Aſſiſt ſuch as are Parents, with a particular Grace, for duly ſatisfying their difficult Charge in the Education of their Children, and for the good Government of their Families; help all in the State of Widowhood; give thoſe Wiſdom, who deſign to alter their Condition, and be thou, O God, the Comfort and Counſel of ſuch as conſecrate the Remainder of their Days to Thee.

And in whatever Families, or between whatever Perſons, there are at preſent any Contentions, Quarrels or uncharitable Animoſities, heal them, I beſeech Thee, and mercifully reſtore that Spirit of the Primitive Chriſtians, whereby all may ſtudy to put on the Bowels of Charity, and embrace every Neighbour in the Bonds of Peace.

Give Grace, O God, to the Rich, and teach them to make ſuch Uſe of their Plenty, that they may be able to give an Account of their Talents, and not be confounded; comfort the Poor in all their Wants, and ſo ſtrengthen them in Submiſſion and Patience, that what they ſuffer here may be the Encreaſe of their eternal Crown. Give a Senſe of Juſtice to all, who take Pains for a Livelihood, and grant they may be honeſt in all their Dealings, and be afraid of doing Wrong. Direct Servants in all their Ways, make them faithful and diligent in what belongs to their Charge, and teach them to take Pains for Heaven, as well as for Bread. Let thy Law dwell in the Hearts of all Officers of Juſtice, in Magiſtrates, and in all Rulers, whom thou haſt put over us, that they may do in all Things what is right and juſt, as to the Encouragement of the Good, and Puniſhment of the Evil-Doer. Be a Guide to all the Paſtors of thy Church: Give them the Spirit of the Apoſtles, that with Zeal and Piety they may labour in their great Charge, and by good Example ſhine as ſo many Lights to the Flock. Encourage the Diligent, ſpur on

thoſe that are ſlothful, and reform all thoſe, I beſeech Thee, who live not to Edification.

In thy Mercy likewiſe remember, O God, all the barbarous Nations of the World, all *Turks* and *Jews*, and bring them to the Knowledge of thy Truth. Thy infinite Power can never want Means for effecting this great Work, whenever Thou art pleaſed. Vouchſafe therefore, I beſeech Thee, to have Compaſſion on thoſe numerous People, and let thy Goodneſs command them to enter into thy Fold. Have Mercy, O God, on all, who art the Creator and Redeemer of all.

At Night.

HAving experienced the Effects of thy infinite Goodneſs, O God, towards me this Day, I here now acknowledge them before Thee, and give Thee Thanks, for that Thou haſt been ſo merciful to me, who', thro' my Sins, am unworthy of the leaſt of thy Favours.

Thanks be to Thee, O Father of Mercy, for that I have been provided, this Day, with all Neceſſaries for a comfortable Subſiſtance, which ſo many Thouſands have wanted, more deſerving than I. For this, O God, I bow down, and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, for my Preſervation, this Day, amidſt ſo many Dangers of this World. Infinite are the Misfortunes of every Day; and that I have had no Part in them is the Effect of thy Goodneſs. For this, O God, I bow down, and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, for whatever Share of Health I have had this Day, and for whatever

whatever Succeſs I have had in my Buſineſs. For this, O God, I bow down, and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, for thy Goodneſs, in having ſtrengthened me againſt Temptations, preſerved me from many Indiſcretions, and exempted me from many Sins. There has been no Sin committed againſt Thee, this Day, but might have been my Unhappineſs, and it is thy Mercy, that I have been preſerved. For this, O God, I bow down, and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, for whatever Good I have done this Day, or the Duties I have performed, and whatever Care I have uſed in reſiſting Evil, in overcoming myſelf or the World. For this, O God, I bow down, and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

I thank Thee likewiſe, O God, for all other Bleſſings which I have received from thy Hand, however unknown to me; for all the Effects of thy Protection and Providence, and, in particular, that Thou haſt ſpared my Life, and not cut me off in the Midſt of my Sins.

It is a great Mercy, O God, That Thou giveſt me Time to repent: And I moſt humbly beg thy Grace, that I may make a good Uſe of the Addition of Days which Thou granteſt me. And that I may no more put that to the Hazard, which, if once loſt, can never more be recovered. Let it be thy Mercy to me, to give me, this Night, a ſincere and hearty Repentance of all the Sins of my whole Life, and ſo to diſpoſe my Soul, that I may cloſe my Eyes, this

this Night, with ſuch a ſolid Peace of Conſcience, as if this Day were to be my laſt, and I were to ſee no more.

In order to this, behold, O God, I here proſtrate myſelf before Thee, in the humble Acknowledgment of all my Sins. I confeſs to Thee my Iniquities, my Ingratitude, my general Abuſe of thy Bleſſings, and my daily Neglect of whatever has belong'd to thy Service. And I own my Unworthineſs to be ſuch, that I can ſee nothing in myſelf, but Motives of Deſpair. But knowing Thee to be a God, infinite in Compaſſion, Goodneſs and Mercy, and that Thou haſt promiſed Pardon to ſuch, as with a true Repentance are converted to Thee, in Confidence of this Promiſe I turn to Thee, and proteſt, that my Sins are a Trouble to me; it is an Affliction to me, to ſee how careleſs I have been in ſerving Thee, how unworthily I have neglected thy Commandments, and how rebelliouſly I have lifted up my Head againſt Thee. I am confounded to think, how ſuch a poor Worm as I, who am nothing but Duſt and Miſery, and have nothing to truſt to, but thy pure Mercy, ſhould ſo long live forgetful of thee, ſo loving a Father, and even ſo far deſpiſe thy Will, as to ſeek to pleaſe myſelf in ſuch Ways as I knew were diſpleaſing to Thee.

Ah! my God, this my Iniquity is now a Trouble to me, and I thank Thee, O God, that it is ſo. Perfect this Trouble, I beſeech Thee, and grant it may be the Trouble of an humble and contrite Heart; ſuch a Trouble, as may be accompanied with a real Abhorrence

horrence of all wilful Sin, a Fear of all Relapſe, and a ſincere Reſolution of doing whatever may be neceſſary, for overcoming my own Corruption, and avoiding all the Occaſions of Sin: Grant this, O God, and then I doubt not, but thy Promiſes will be fulfilled in me, and I ſhall find Mercy in thy Sight.

Thus I hope it is at preſent, and with this Hope I commit myſelf to thy fatherly Protection this Night. Defend me, I beſeech Thee, from all Evil, and ſuffer not the Enemy to have any Power over me; deliver me from all Illuſions, and give me Grace to reſiſt whatever is ſinful. Grant me a happy Reſt; ſuch Reſt as may be for neceſſary Refreſhment, but not an Indulgence of Sloth. Lord, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.

EXERCISES
ON
VIRTUES, VICES,
And other
SUBJECTS.

FAITH.

I Confeſs Thee, O my God, to be the Eternal Truth, and that I am bound to believe whatever thou teacheſt; becauſe thou canſt teach nothing but what is true. This is my Duty; but to do it muſt be thy Gift, O God: Grant therefore, I beſeech thee, that with an humble Faith I may receive, and with a firm Faith hold faſt all thoſe Truths which thou haſt revealed, and commanded all thy Faithful to believe.

I muſt

I muſt acknowledge, that many of thy ſacred Myſteries appear ſtrange and ſurpriſing to my weak Capacity, and that when I endeavour to comprehend them, I loſe both myſelf and them in the Enquiry: Hence, how often is it, that a heavy Oppreſſion damps my Spirits, and I quite ſink down, diſtracted between the Fears of a ſinful Preſumption, and of Infidelity.

Vain Imaginations likewiſe trouble me, when led by a boundleſs Curioſity; I endeavour to take off the Vail from thoſe Things which thou art pleaſed ſhould be yet myſterious to us, in this imperfect State; and a wonderful Confuſion is the Effect of theſe Attempts, when committing thy Divine Truths to the Examination of my working Fancy, I always find Darkneſs to be the Puniſhment of my undue Search for Light.

In theſe Particulars I own my Weakneſs, my Raſhneſs, Folly and Sin. For, ſince all the Faculties of my Soul are ſo wounded, weakened, and almoſt diſabled by Sin, that I cannot truly comprehend the leaſt of thy Works; that the moſt inconſiderable of thy Creatures are a Myſtery to me; that in all my Enquiries I find little of Certainty, beſides the reproachful Conviction of my own ſcanty and ſhort-ſighted Underſtanding; how can I be excuſed from ſinful Raſhneſs, who, amidſt this daily Evidence of my Weakneſs, yet preſume to reaſon, judge, and pronounce of Thee, and of thoſe greater Myſteries, which are infinitely ſuperior to all that is created?

Did

Did I not every Moment meet with Proofs of my own Blindneſs: Did I not believe thy Judgement to be unſearchable, and thy Ways paſt finding out, I might have ſome Plea to offer in my Excuſe; but as it is, I muſt acknowledge it to be the Folly and Pride of a blind, ſinful Worm, which knowing nothing, yet ſtill boldly goes on, as if it were capable, under this Blindneſs, of diſcerning and knowing all.

O God, pardon, I beſeech Thee, all this my paſt Preſumption; and let not this Raſhneſs of a poor, blind Creature, exclude me from thy Mercy. For though I have often fallen into this Guilt, yet I here, with a profound Humility, own the Folly of it: I confeſs to Thee all my Pride and Weakneſs in this Point; I accuſe and condemn myſelf for it, and I appeal to thy infinite Goodneſs to ſhew Mercy to a repenting Sinner.

And that I may give Proof of my Sincerity, behold, fearful of myſelf, I earneſtly beg thy Protection of this unhappy Clay, that I may no more be left to the undue Liberty of my own Thoughts, in which I can have no Confidence; but that, by thy Grace, they may receive an effectual Check, as often as they are tranſgreſſing the Bounds which thou haſt prefixed to them. Be Thou a Guard to them, and let my Thoughts be confined to that Diſcipline which is thy Appointment. Be thou a Watch over me, and as often as I forget myſelf, powerfully awaken my Soul, and make me ſenſible of my Preſumption.

Defend

Defend me from all the Temptations of a vain Curioſity, that I may never pretend to unvail what thou art pleaſed ſhould be yet a Myſtery to me. Moderate all my reſtleſs Imaginations, and working Fancies, that they never preſume to look into thy Councils and diſcloſe thy Secrets; and whenever Grief or Melancholy oppreſſes my Soul, convince me then of my more than ordinary Weakneſs; and let not my clouded Faculties undertake to judge of ſuch Matters, which, in their cleareſt Light, they are not capable of diſcerning.

Let an humble Modeſty keep my Reaſon within its due Bounds, that I may not be too wiſe in my own Conceit; that while I make Uſe of this Light, according to thy Appointment in the common Conduct of my Life, I may not preſume it to be the true Meaſure of thy Being, of thy Power, and of thy Truths, and boldly throw all that by, as fabulous, which my Reaſon cannot comprehend.

I own it an Act of the ſoundeſt Reaſon, that thy Creatures ſubmit to Thee, their God; and that, as for whatever Myſteries are delivered to them by thy Authority, it is as much againſt Reaſon not to receive them, as it is to reject ſuch obvious Truths, which have Evidence and Demonſtration to recommend them. I have therefore nothing to diſpute, nothing to queſtion in whatever Points come to me with thy Authority. Though they are in themſelves obſcure, and without any Proportion to my Reaſon; yet, when thy Authority appears, and thou haſt ſaid, *They are ſo*; there is in this one

Point

Point a *Greater Certainty* than whatever can come from the cleareſt of human Lights, and this is the Certainty of *Faith.*

It is true, I hear not thy Voice, as *Moſes* did, and the Apoſtles, but I hear thy Church, by which Thou ſpeakeſt to the whole World; and in hearing thoſe whom Thou commandeſt me to hear, I hear Thee. The Church is purchaſed by the Blood of my Redeemer; *Chriſt* is the Foundation and Rock upon which it is built; the Holy Ghoſt is its Light and Teacher: I have thy ſolemn Word engaged, that the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it; that it is the Ground and Pillar of Truth, and that it ſhall be led into all Truth to the End of the World: It is one Article of my Creed; I have thy expreſs Command to hear it, and thy Promiſe that it ſhall teach Truth; and is not all this enough for me to reſt on, and to conclude, without leaving Place for Doubt, that, in hearing thy Church, I hear Thee?

O God, I acknowledge this to be an Effect of thy infinite Mercy, that in Things of this high Nature, ſuch as are the Chriſtian Myſteries, thou haſt not left me to the Uncertainty of my own Judgment, nor to the doubtful Deciſions of Human Reaſon, or Learning; for what could have been the Effect of ſuch Uncertainty, in a Caſe where Truth is made the Condition of Eternity, but a reſtleſs Confuſion, Diſtraction, and Deſpair? I thank thee for having, in this Point, abundantly provided for my Security and Peace,

in eſtabliſhing ſuch an Authority for my Inſtruction, which, having thy Commiſſion to teach, and thy Promiſe to ſecure it, I cannot queſtion, but by bringing thy infinite Goodneſs and Truth into doubt.

I thank thee, likewiſe, for that ſacred Volume of thy Holy Word, in which are recorded all thoſe Leſſons which can be neceſſary for our Inſtruction and Comfort, where the Unbeliever may learn to adore thy Power; where the Sinner is invited by Mercy, and terrified by Juſtice; where the Slothful are ſpurr'd on, the Inconſtant are confirm'd, and thy faithful Servants are powerfully and ſweetly carried on in all thoſe Ways which lead to the eternal Poſſeſſion of Thee. May my Soul always feed on theſe Truths, and by them may I always live! that having overcome the World and myſelf, at the laſt Hour, not I, but *Chriſt* may be found in me.

May I always read thy Truths with Reverence, and an humble Submiſſion to that Spirit by which they were written! Permit me not to abuſe this Food of Life, by my own corrupt Interpretations, nor to pervert to my own Deſtruction what was deſigned by thy Mercy for my greateſt Good. I know the Charge Thou haſt given, of neither *adding* to thy Word, nor *diminiſhing* it. If this were only as to the *Words* or *Letter*, it is eaſily obſerv'd, and the Danger can be only to Few of incurring the Guilt. But, if *adding* to the *Senſe* of thy Word, or *diminiſhing* it, be an equal Sacrilege, then, O God, how fearful ought I

to

to be, of giving Liberty to my own private Expoſitions; leſt, by being bold in any Miſtake, I do Violence to thy ſacred Word, and, by this Preſumption, ſhut myſelf out of the Book of Life.

Give me, O God, a docile Heart, and let that true Humility poſſeſs my Underſtanding, that it may, without Diſpute, yield itſelf Captive in obedience to *Chriſt* and his Truths. If there be Darkneſs in what is propoſed, may I ever acknowledge this more becoming thy infinite Majeſty, to be above all that I can apprehend! And may I own the Juſtice of Believing without Seeing, who am an unhappy Heir of thoſe Sinners who firſt tranſgreſs'd thy Command, by the unreaſonable Deſires of ſeeing what thou hadſt hidden from them! Upon this Motive of ſo juſt a Penance, I ſubmit to all the Darkneſs of my State, and chearfully receive all thy Truths, tho' I have only an imperfect Glimpſe of them, and the fuller Proſpect is intercepted by a Cloud.

But, O God, ſince I muſt own ſome Seeds of Infidelity to be ſtill left in me; and that, through my general Corruption, my Faith is not privileg'd againſt Temptations, any more than other Virtues, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee to confirm me againſt all ſuch Aſſaults; and that, as my Faith is thy Gift, ſo my Perſeverance in it may be the Effect of thy Grace. Defend me againſt the Deluſions of all Errors, and againſt the plauſible Snares of Wit or Learning; ſtrengthen me under all the Surprizes of a roving Fancy, and may I ever ſtart

at the Raſhneſs, as often as my Reaſon exceeds its Bounds, and, inſtead of receiving what is delivered, is caſting all my Myſteries over again in its own ſcanty and diſproportioned Moulds. In theſe, and all other Dangers, let thy Grace, O God, ſecure me.

And becauſe there are many other Temptations, as from the Diſcourſe and Railleries of prophane and atheiſtical Men; as likewiſe from the Difficulties of Times in which thy Truth lies under ſevere Oppreſſions; I beſeech Thee to preſerve me in all theſe Dangers. Take from me the Love of all prophane Company, and give me a Diſlike of their Converſation: May I have an Abhorrence of whatever is thus diſpleaſing to Thee, and undermines at once the whole Work of the Goſpel! I muſt earneſtly implore thy Mercy in this Point; defend me againſt this deteſtable Crime; rather let me now die, than live to become ſuch a profeſſed Rebel againſt Thee. And as for all other Dangers, I beſeech Thee ſo to eſtabliſh my Heart in Truth, that I may rather chuſe all Extremities in this World, than purchaſe a ſhort Quiet, by denying that for which I ſhall be denied by *Chriſt* before Thee, his Father in Heaven.

O God, who didſt ſo ſtrengthen *Abraham* in Faith, that he believed in Hope even againſt Hope; grant that, with a like Faith, I may receive all thy Truths, and that Objections from human Reaſon may never weaken in me whatever is delivered by thy Authority.

O God, who didſt give to *Noah* and *Lot* a firm Faith in thy Words; grant that, with a like Faith, I may believe whatever Thou haſt ſpoken.

O God,

O God, who didſt appoint *Moſes* over thy People, for their Conduct into *Canaan*; who didſt ſpeak to them by him, and therefore commandeſt them to hear him; and with thy ſevereſt Judgments didſt puniſh thoſe who queſtioned his Authority, and ſeparated from him: Grant that I may ever hear thoſe whom thou haſt appointed to guide thy Flock; that in them I may hear Thee; that I may never leſſen their Authority to have their Charter from Thee; and that I may equally dread all Diviſion and Schiſm, as to be cut off from Thee.

O God, by whoſe Gift the Apoſtles did believe in *Chriſt*, did obey his Word, and readily forſook all to follow him: Grant that, with a like Faith, I may believe whatever Thou haſt taught, and that, with a like Zeal, deſpiſing the World, I may perform whatever Thou commandeſt.

O God, who, by an Effect of thy Juſtice, didſt permit Scribes and Phariſees to abide in their Blindneſs, ſo as not to be moved by the Wonders of thy Power and Goodneſs; but, by their malicious Miſconſtructions, to lay all thy Works under the worſt of Infamy: Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all Degrees of this Blindneſs, that neither Education, Intereſt, Prejudice or Paſſion, may corrupt my Judgment, and hinder me in the diſcerning of Truth: Grant, in thy Mercy, that I may never oppoſe thy Truths; and that I never ſay or do any Thing by which thy Faith may be brought under any Reproach.

O God, who requireſt of all thy Faithful to be holy in their Converſation as their Vocation is holy; and to avoid all that can give Offence; that ſo Unbelievers may not thence take Occaſion of blaſpheming thy Faith: Grant my Converſation may be in all Things agreeable to the Goſpel I profeſs, that I never give Scandal to Unbelievers; and that Truth may not be brought under a Reproach, by any Indiſcretions, Follies, Raſhneſs, Irregularities, or Sins of mine.

O God, who by the Strength of Faith didſt carry the Apoſtles, and infinite Numbers of the Primitive Chriſtians, through moſt difficult Trials, and by thy Grace didſt ſo ſupport them, that they ſuffered all Extremities in Teſtimony of thy Truth, and rejoiced in their Sufferings: Grant I may inherit a large Portion of their Spirit; that I may not only be ſteady in the Profeſſion of thy Faith, but likewiſe be ready to part with all the deareſt Conveniencies of Life, rather than forſake or diſown any Truth received from Thee. May it be rather my Glory, than my Fear, to ſuffer in ſuch a Cauſe in which thou art not only the Witneſs, but likewiſe the Reward and Crown!

O God, who haſt commanded all Nations of the World to be united in one Faith; and both in thy Precepts and Judgments haſt declared thy Abhorrence of Diviſion, Schiſms and Hereſy, mercifully ſend forth thy Light upon all that are in Error, that, being ſenſible of their Miſtake, they may be all united in thy Truth. Heal, we beſeech Thee, all Schiſms; take away all Hereſies, what-

whatever and wherever they be. Open the Hearts of the blind *Jews*, that they may believe; and have Compaſſion on all poor Infidels throughout the World, that being brought to the Knowledge of Thee and thy *Chriſt*, they may become a Part of thy Fold.

O God, I beſeech Thee, by thoſe Bowels of Mercy which moved Thee to the Redemption of loſt Man, and by that Blood which my Redeemer ſhed upon the Croſs, in Obedience to thy holy Will, that thou wouldeſt have Regard to divided *Chriſtendom*, and mercifully heal its Wound. The Deformity of it is very great, occaſioned by its Schiſms; and ſuch are the diſmal Effects, that Religion and Truth are in Danger of being loſt, amidſt the uncharitable Contentions for them. There is nothing can prevent a general Deluge of Libertiniſm, Prophaneneſs and Atheiſm, in theſe Diſorders, but thy Hand, O God. Have Pity, therefore, on thy People, and for the Glory of thy Name, and of the Goſpel, planted by the Blood of thy only Son, ſend Remedy for this ſpreading Evil. Inſpire all Prelates and Paſtors with the Thoughts of Peace; move all temporal Magiſtrates to be inſtrumental in it; give to all, who undertake the Miniſtry, a Zeal for this general Good, and prepare the People with a ſincere Deſire of becoming thus truly happy.

For this End, O bleſſed God, weaken in as many, as profeſs thy Name, all Impreſſions which are not of Truth; and may it be their Confuſion of Conſcience, who ſuffer the Arguments of Intereſt or Party to prevail with

them, to the Prejudice of that common Union both in Faith and Charity, which thou requireſt from all that believe the Goſpel. O bleſſed *Jeſus*, plead this Cauſe with thy eternal Father, and let not the Work of thy Redemption lie any longer under this Reproach. Obtain for all a zealous Deſire for Truth; open the Eyes of all that are in Error; communicate to them a new Light, give them upright and ſincere Hearts, and let no Obſtinacy or Paſſion ſtand in the Way of this ſo much deſired Good. Inſpire all thy Members to unite in this Petition, and may their Prayers, their Sighs and Tears never ceaſe to importune Heaven in this Cauſe! May all join in it, till all come into One Body, of which Thou art the Head, in which all with one Voice may glorify Thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, liveſt and reigneſt One God, World without! End *Amen.*

HOPE.

I Confeſs, O God, that thy Mercy is infinite, thy Goodneſs incomprehenſible, and that thy Compaſſion for all, that call upon Thee in Diſtreſs, is above Meaſure.

I know, likewiſe, that thy Promiſes are many and ſolemn, which thou haſt made to all ſuch as place their Confidence in Thee, that they ſhall not be confounded; that ſuch as ſeek Thee, ſhall find Thee; and that Thou wilt be

be a Helper to all thoſe who fly to Thee in their Neceſſities.

I know again, Thou art both faithful to thy Promiſes, and haſt all Power to perform them; ſo that there is nothing in Thee from whence the pooreſt Petitioner can take any Occaſion of Diſtruſt.

It is true, however, that through Sin I am become not only unworthy of thy Mercies, but likewiſe incapable of doing any thing that can poſſibly move Thee to have Compaſſion on me; ſo that though Thou, O God, art infinite in Mercy; yet, through Sin, I ſee myſelf excluded from it.

But here again, under theſe unhappy Circumſtances, I have the greateſt Proof of thy Mercy, in the Reconciliation made by the Death of thy only Son on the Croſs. For by his Blood the Price of Sin being paid, our Peace is made with Thee; and I can now *boldly come*, as thy Apoſtle encourages me, *to the Throne of Grace, to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need.* So that altho' in myſelf I ſee nothing but Grounds of Deſpair; yet now, in this Ranſom, having ſo plentiful a Redemption, ſuch a Victim, and ſuch a High-Prieſt to plead, and make Interceſſion for me, I have all the Motives of Hope that I can deſire; and, having all thy Promiſes open before me, I have Hopes as large as thy Promiſes.

This Hope, thus grounded on thy Mercy, O God, on thy Power, on thy Promiſes, on thy Fidelity and Truth, through the Merits

and Paſſion of thy only Son, I beſeech thee to confirm and ſtrengthen in me, that it may be the Comfort of my Soul under all the Difficulties of this Life; that it may ſupport me in Dangers; that it may give Life to my Prayer, and, carrying me through all the Changes of any mortal Courſe, may accompany me even in the Horror of Death, and never fail, but in the Poſſeſſion of Thee, my God.

This I have Reaſon to aſk, becauſe of the great Weakneſs to which I am ſubject; and which, with all Humility, I here confeſs to Thee, O God. For, altho' I believe in Thee all that poſſibly can oblige me to perſevere in a ſtrong and uninterrupted Hope; yet how often and how eaſily do I loſe the Senſe of theſe Motives, as if (I am aſhamed to ſay it) as if Thou, my God, either hadſt no Knowledge of what afflicts me, or no Concern to help me?

It is but too true (for why ſhould I conceal my Miſery?) that in ordinary Accidents, ſuch as are inſeparable from human Life, I preſently loſe all Patience, and am often left without Comfort: When ſudden Darkneſs oppreſſes my Mind, I ſeem like a Perſon quite out of the Care of Heaven: When any Misfortune interrupts my Peace, I ſink down, as if never more to have a Return of Comfort: When thy Scourge touches me, though never ſo juſt, I am inclined to murmur, and think no Body ſo unhappy as myſelf; I ſigh for Death, for my Deliverance, without conſidering how unprepar'd I am for dying, who am ſo impatient in the common Difficulties of Life.

Theſe

Theſe are ſome of my many Infirmities, O Lord, wherein my Soul, as it were ignorant of thy Power and Goodneſs, ſinks ſo low, that ſhe ſeems to be without all the Comfort of Hope. And this is a Trouble to me, to ſee how very weak I am; that, when I think myſelf prepared for the greateſt Trials, a little Accident caſts me ſo much down, that I ſeem to have no Knowledge of God, who can either hear or help me. Wherefore, O merciful Lord, who knoweſt all my Weakneſs, give me Leave, under this Senſe which I at preſent have of it, to call upon Thee for Help; that by Thee I may be ſtrengthened, who, without Thee, am nothing.

O God, who ſeeſt my great Poverty and Weakneſs, ſtand by me, I beſeech Thee, under all the Contradictions, Difficulties, Loſſes and Afflictions of human Life: Permit me not then to be overwhelmed with Trouble; nor let the Thoughts of Misfortunes, which cannot laſt long, baniſh from my Mind the Senſe of all that is Eternal. Send forth thy Light then upon me, and bring to my Mind a lively Remembrance of thy Goodneſs, thy Mercy, and thy Power. Let the Sight of theſe remove from my Heart all Oppreſſion; let a peaceable Submiſſion ſucceed; and let ſuch a ſtrong Hope raiſe up my Soul, that it may ſtand upright under the greateſt Weight, and there go on with Comfort, where there is nothing of human Comfort in Sight.

O God,

O God, remember me, I beſeech Thee, in the Day of Trouble, and when Affliction preſſes hard upon me, let me then be ſenſible that Thou art my God. May I, in that Hour, confeſs, that nothing happens but by thy Appointment or Permiſſion, and with this Conviction reſt ſatisfied under the Diſpenſations of thy Hand!

May I then remember, that what Thou ordaineſt is beſt for me; that Thou knoweſt when to afflict, and when to give Relief; and hence, with Patience and Hope in all Trouble, may I wait for thy Comforts!

Preſerve this Hope in me, as often as Heavineſs or Darkneſs lays a Weight upon my Spirits, and almoſt deprives me of the Sight of Heaven. That is the Hour in which I am moſt in Danger, both from my own ſinking Thoughts, and from the malicious Deſigns of the Enemy. Help me, I beſeech Thee, in that Hour, and defend me from all the Dangers of it; let thy heavenly Light dart forth upon my Soul; amidſt all its Darkneſs, let Faith be its Guide, and ſupport it with Hope. Behold, I proteſt now for then, that I renounce all kinds of Suggeſtions that are injurious to that Faith and Hope which I am bound to have in Thee. Have Regard to this as my voluntary Act; and as to whatever other Thoughts ſhall occur in Time of Confuſion, paſs them by, I beſeech Thee, and with Compaſſion forgive them, as the Effect of a Weakneſs which I lament in myſelf, but know not how to overcome.

Have

Have Pity on me, O God, under all kinds of Dejection, and teach me this one Leſſon of ſeeking Comfort in Thee, when all things elſe appear bitter to me. Teach me to rejoice in God my Saviour, and to reſt with Peace in him, when I ſeem quite forſaken, and have no Peace in any thing elſe. It is hard to infirm Nature to ſink ſo low as to become ſtupid, and to be left without either Light or Life: This deſerves Compaſſion; but does it not deſerve Reproach too, for a Chriſtian to be thus caſt down, when he has a God to encourage him, and infinite Power and Goodneſs ſtanding ready for his Relief? Permit me not, O God, to fall under this Reproach; but, under all Oppreſſions, may I ſtill retain a Hope in Thee; that even then I may be filled with Courage and Comfort, when the whole World ſeems armed againſt me!

In particular, O God, have Compaſſion when the Number of my Sins riſe up againſt me; and when my repeated Endeavours for Amendment, proving fruitleſs, tempt me with Deſpair. Theſe Thoughts ſometimes weigh very heavy upon my Soul, and I ſeem like one loſt, when I ſee nothing good in myſelf. But, O God, let thy Mercy be extended to me, even under theſe Circumſtances, and let a lively Hope give Life to my Soul. Raiſe up my Spirit then with a clear Proſpect of thy infinite Goodneſs, which is ever ready to receive the Sighs of repenting Sinners; and let the Blood of my Redeemer be my Aſſurance, that there is no Wickedneſs ſo great which may

may not be purified in theſe Streams. Upon this Foundation let my Hope ſtand firm, and defeat all the Attempts of Deſpair. And when I ſee no Reaſon to truſt in myſelf, let not then unreaſonable Fears, but Joy ſucceed; for that, ſeeing no Motive to truſt in myſelf, I am then better prepared to put my whole Truſt in Thee.

It is a dejecting Proſpect, when a poor Creature, ſeeing himſelf upon the Entrance of Eternity, can find nothing in himſelf capable of affording any Comfort; nothing but repeated Failings; Purpoſes without Amendment; the Form of a Chriſtian Life, without the Subſtance; many Things undertaken, but nothing done well; Pride, Self-love, or a worldly Spirit, mixed with all he does; infinite Weakneſſes; great Poverty; ſcarce any Signs of the true Love of God; many known Sins continually reproaching him, beſides the Apprehenſion of all his hidden Sins, which very much encreaſe his Fears. This I confeſs to be my Caſe; I wiſh it be not ſtill much worſe; and what can be the Effect upon my Soul, but Confuſion and Deſpair, if Thou, O God, doſt not mercifully ſtand by me, and, by the Comforts of thy infinite Goodneſs, ſupport my ſinking Spirits?

Therefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, moſt loving Father, as often as theſe Thoughts preſs immoderately upon me, that Thou would'ſt pleaſe to revive my Soul with the comfortable Proſpect of all thy Mercies; then manifeſt to me thy infinite Goodneſs; let the Sacrifice, which

which Chriſt offered for Sinners, be preſent before my Eyes, and may his Voice ſound in my Ears! *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh ye.* With theſe Comforts of thy Goodneſs towards Sinners, may all Darkneſs, Dejection, and Deſpair be baniſhed from my Soul! and while I ſee too many Reaſons to fear, becauſe of my own Unworthineſs, let this Fear be always balanced by the Sight of thy Mercy, which commands me, amidſt all Fears, to put my Truſt in Thee.

This Grace, I aſk of Thee, O God, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, for that laſt Hour, when the Anguiſh of Death ſhall come upon me. In that Hour, I beſeech Thee, by all thy Bowels of Compaſſion, to be a Comforter, a Father, and a God to me. Defend me then from all the Aſſaults of the Enemy; and if immoderate Fears ſhall ariſe from the Apprehenſion of my paſt Sins, ſo as to leſſen the Hope I ought to have of Thee, then let the Sight of thy infinite Mercies bring new Light and Comfort to my Soul; then command me to reſt in thy Goodneſs, and to take Shelter in the ſacred Wounds of my Redeemer; and there, O bleſſed Jeſus, do Thou ſpeak to my Soul; undertake her Cauſe, and be Thou her Advocate to the Eternal Father: Protect her againſt all the Deſigns of the Devil; and, moderating all Terrors, raiſe up my Soul in Hope. Forſake me not, I beſeech Thee, in that laſt Conflict; and having ſo often found the wonderful Effects of thy Good-

Goodneſs, throughout the whole Courſe of my Life, permit me not then to ſink down with Fear, as if I had no God to help me; but mercifully grant, that, with a lively Faith, and a firm Hope, I may peaceably give up my Soul into thy Hands, and rejoice in Thee, my God.

O God, by whoſe Grace *Noah* ſtood conſtant with an entire Confidence in Thee, amidſt the Ruins of a periſhing World, grant, that in all Troubles I may reſt with a like Hope in Thee.

O God, by whoſe Grace *Abraham* retained a firm Hope in thy Promiſes, amidſt all the Impoſſibilities of Nature and common Reaſon; grant that, amidſt all Diſcouragements, I may reſt with a like Confidence in thy Promiſes, and with a like Hope in Thee.

O God, who didſt ſupport *Moſes* by Hope, amidſt ſo many Difficulties and Dangers, both from *Pharaoh*, from his own People, and the Deſart; grant, that in all Difficulties and Dangers, both of Life and Death, my Soul may reſt with a like Hope in Thee.

O God, who, by a Hope in thy Power and Goodneſs, didſt prepare *Joſhua* for that great Work of carrying the Children of *Iſrael* into the Land of Promiſe, and ſubduing many ſtrong Nations before their Face; grant, that, in whatever I undertake, my Confidence may not be in human Means, but in thy Bleſſing and Power; and that, by an entire Hope in theſe, I may undertake and perform whatever

ever I am to do throughout the whole Courſe of my Life.

O God, who, by a Hope in thy Power, didſt carry on *David* fearleſs againſt the *Philiſtine Goliah*; grant, that a like Hope may remove from me all undue Fears, and that, confirmed by the ſame, I may walk on ſecurely, wherever my Duty leads me.

O God, who, amidſt ſo many Perſecutions from *Saul*, didſt ſtill preſerve *David*, and ſupport him by Hope; mercifully aſſiſt me in all the Difficulties of this Life; and let nothing of Deſpair enter into my Heart, as long as I know I have a God to help me.

O God, who didſt wonderfully protect *Daniel*, and the three Children; ſo that neither the Den of Lions, nor the fiery Furnace, were able to overthrow their Hope in Thee; grant, that a like Hope in thy Name may accompany me in all Dangers, and that no Terrors of this Life may deſtroy, or even leſſen that Truſt which I ought to have in thy holy Name.

O Jeſus, who, by receiving into thy Favour the greateſt Sinners upon their Converſion, haſt given Proof of the Greatneſs of thy Mercy; grant, that the Horror of my Sins may never tempt me to diſtruſt in Thee; but that, in Proportion to thy tender Mercies, a lively Hope may at all times give Life to my Soul.

O Jeſus, who haſt manifeſted to the World, that the End of thy coming was to ſeek the loſt Sheep, and to call Sinners to Repentance; grant that the Remembrance of this thy Goodneſs may remove from my Soul all Degrees of Deſpair; and that no Doubts of thy Mercy may ever diſcourage my Repentance, as often as I ſincerely deſire to return to Thee.

O Jeſus, who, for reconciling Sinners to God, didſt offer thyſelf upon the Croſs, a Sacrifice for Sin; grant that the Faith of this Mercy may be, both living and dying, the Ground of my Hope; and that I may ever come before the Throne of God with Confidence of Favour, who have the Blood of my Redeemer, true God and Man, to plead for me.

O Jeſus, who didſt ſtretch forth thy Hand to *Peter*, ſinking under the Waves; grant that by the ſame Power I may be ſupported; and that, as often as my Soul is ready to ſink, it may be ſtill raiſed up by Thee. O Jeſus, as often as I fail in Faith or in Hope, ſtretch forth thy Hand, and help me.

O Jeſus, who in pardoning Sinners, and freeing the Miſerable from their Infirmities, didſt command them to have Faith and Confidence in Thee, as one neceſſary Condition for receiving the Helps they deſired; grant that by a firm Faith, and Hope in thy Goodneſs, I may be ever prepared for partaking the Effects of thy Mercy, and obtaining Relief in all my Neceſſities.

O

O Jeſus, who hadſt Compaſſion on the Multitude in the Deſart, and, by thy miraculous Power, didſt plentifully feed them when they were deſtitute of all human Means; grant that in all my Neceſſities, my Eyes and Expectation may be always upon Thee; and that in the greateſt Extremities, I may never loſe my Hope, which has ſuch infinite Power and Goodneſs to ſupport it.

Thus, O bleſſed Jeſus, let a firm and lively Hope in Thee, carry me through all the Difficulties and Diſcouragements of this miſerable Life: And though I may have often Reaſon to fear, becauſe of my great Unworthineſs, yet, O God, I beſeech Thee, never permit theſe Apprehenſions to be followed with a Diſtruſt of Thee. Let me always remember, that my Miſery does not deſtroy thy Goodneſs, and that though I am never ſo unworthy, becauſe of my manifold Sins, yet Thou art ſtill infinite in Mercy, which being always inclined, and even deſirous to do Good, is always ready to have Compaſſion on thoſe who are ſincere in ſeeking it. On this Mercy I depend, on this I build all my Hope. Preſerve this Hope in me, O God, in all Dangers and Diſtreſs, in all Dejections and Darkneſs, in all Diſquiets and Trouble; and let it not be diminiſhed either by the Horror of my Sins, or by the Suggeſtions of the Devil, or by the Terror of Death: But in all Circumſtances let it bear up my Soul, till it be paſt all Danger, and be ſecured in the happy Poſſeſſion of Thee, my God.

Remem-

Remember likewiſe, O God, I beſeech Thee, all thy Faithful; let thy Grace and Mercy be their Comfort, in whatever Difficulties and Dangers they may be. Grant that, in all Troubles, they may have Confidence in thy holy Name, and, full of Hope, ſeek Help from Thee. Comfort ſuch as are afflicted; help the Oppreſſed; viſit the Priſoners and Captive; ſuccour the Fatherleſs and Widow, and mercifully aſſiſt all thoſe who are now in their Agony: Let the Multitude of thy tender Mercies preſerve all from Deſpair. And, as for me, being poor, miſerable, and a helpleſs Sinner, unable to do any thing of myſelf, let me never truſt in any ſuch Weakneſs; but let my Confidence be entirely on Thee. When I conſider all thy Mercies, and the great Wonders of thy Goodneſs to poor, ſinful Man, I have enough to confirm me in a ſettled Hope, and I beg that this Hope may never fail me.

CHARITY, or the Love of God.

LORD, I confeſs it my Duty, what Thou haſt commanded, that is, to love Thee, my Lord God, with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind. I know, my God, that Thou art infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely merciful,

ciful, and overflowing in all Perfection, and therefore, that it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know, Thou haſt created me, and that I have neither Being nor Bleſſing but what is the Effect of thy Power and Goodneſs; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know, Thou art the End for which I was created, and that I can expect no Happineſs but in Thee; and therefore, that it is my Duty to ſeek Thee, and love Thee.

I know, that in Compaſſion and Love to me, being loſt through Sin, Thou didſt ſend thy only Son; and that He, being Lord of Glory, was humbled to the Death of the Croſs, that I, a poor Captive, might be raiſed to Glory; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know, Thou haſt provided me with all Helps that can be neceſſary for carrying me through this miſerable Life; to the Poſſeſſion of Glory (to which, of myſelf, I am unable to take one Step) and this out of the Exceſs of thy pure Mercy to me, unworthy of all Mercies; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know, Thou haſt promiſed thyſelf to be the Recompence of whatever Good I do; though there is not any Good I can do, but what muſt be the Effect of thy free Gift, or Grace; and therefore, that, for thy unſpeakable Goodneſs to me, it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know, that every Day of my Life I receive many Bleſſings from Thee, though I every Day

Day offend Thee, and am unworthy of the leaſt of them; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love Thee.

I know Thou haſt ſubjected all Creatures to the Uſe of Man, and that the whole Creation is deſigned by Thee for his Service: Hence I know, it is the Obligation of Man to offer himſelf a daily Sacrifice to Thee, his Benefactor, and that it is my Duty to love Thee.

Upon theſe, and many other Titles, I confeſs it my Duty to love Thee, my God and Redeemer, with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind. I confeſs, this Love ought to have the Command of my Heart, to rule and govern it. By this Love I ought to be directed what to ſeek, what to fear, what to deſire, what to fly, what to do, what to avoid, what to eſteem, what to deſpiſe, what to judge my Happineſs, and what my Miſery. This Love ought to be the Principle or Motive of all the Uſe I make of my Underſtanding, of my Will, of my Affections, of my Senſes, of my Health, Strength, Time, and whatever other Talents or Bleſſings I have received from Thee. All theſe ought to be ordered, applied, diſpoſed, and regulated by the Love of Thee, my God; for, while this is to command my whole Heart, I ought to do nothing but by its Commiſſion: This ought to order and appoint all; and thus only can I ſatisfy my Duty, and thy firſt Command, of loving Thee with all my Heart,

Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind.

I confeſs again, my Lord, that, if I love Thee with all my Heart, this Love will not be barren, but will bring forth Variety of good Fruit, and abound in good Works. It will make me refer all to Thee, and deſire that Thou be glorified in all things: It will incline and draw my Heart towards Thee, ſo as to value Thee above all things; to lament its Abſence from Thee, and earneſtly to deſire to be united to Thee. It will raiſe in me a Solicitude of doing thy Will, and keeping all thy Commandments. It will make me rejoice in pleaſing Thee; and afraid of every thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee. It will oblige me to chuſe all the Inconveniencies of this Life, rather than do any thing that can hazard my eternal Separation from Thee; and make me think no Suffering hard, ſo it may but be a Means of bringing me to the Poſſeſſion of Thee. It will unite my Will to thine, ſo as to approve, and love nothing but what is acceptable to Thee; and to hate whatever thou haſt declared hateful to Thee. It will make me deſirous of converſing with Thee; induſtrious in ſtudying thy Will, and doing whatever it has Reaſon to apprehend moſt effectual for coming to thy Preſence. It will raiſe in me a Diſeſteem of myſelf, and of the World, and oblige me not to regard what theſe commend or demand, becauſe both theſe are corrupt, and averſe to Thee. Thus will the Love of God work, if it be truly in my Heart,

and

and theſe will be ſome of the good Effects of it.

And, is it ſo? Then, O my God, what Reaſon have I to be confounded within my own Soul, who, having ſo often profeſſed that I love Thee, have now Reaſon to queſtion, whether this divine Charity, this holy Love, has been ever truly Maſter of my Heart! For when I look back, I find all the Powers of my Soul have been under the Management of Self-love, and of the Love of the World. Vanity has governed my Senſes; and as for all the Talents and Bleſſings received from thy Hand, I cannot find, upon examining my Accounts, but that human, ſelfiſh, worldly, and vicious Motives have had the greateſt Share in diſpoſing of them. So that, inſtead of having been under the univerſal Command of thy holy Love, I cannot but with Difficulty diſcover where this has crept in but for a little Part; and the great Body of the Actions of my Life, I ſee, has been influenced, regulated, and even commanded by another Power.

For what can I ſay of the general Method of my Life, which has been to conſult Inclination in whatever has occurred, and to follow this Bent, without thinking of Thee, my God? What can I ſay of all that which I have done upon the Impulſe of Humour and Paſſion? What of all that which has had no other Conſideration but to comply with the World, and gratify my own Pride? What of all that which I have done for Intereſt, and to

ſatisfy

ſatisfy a covetous and worldly Spirit? And what of all that, O God, where I have been led along by the Violence of corrupt, ſinful, and vicious Paſſions, and have had no more Regard to thy Law, than if I had been an Heathen? If all this be taken and ſet aſide out of my Life, how very little, O my God, will be left (and I wiſh any thing) wherein the Love of Thee has been the only Mover, and I have had no other Intention but to pleaſe Thee in doing thy holy Will?

So very little, that I have Reaſon, with daily Tears, to lament my unhappy State, in having ſo many Years lived in the Neglect of the firſt and greateſt of all thy Commands, and gone on ſo long unmindful of Thee, whom I ought to have ſought, ſerved, and loved above all things. For this, my great Crime, O God, I now moſt humbly implore thy Mercy, beſeeching Thee to have Compaſſion on this thy poor Servant, for I ſee and confeſs my Iniquity is very great; ſo that were it not for thy infinite Goodneſs, which encourages me, I could not, after ſo intolerable and ungrateful a Neglect, have the Confidence to appear before Thee. But now, O bleſſed God, being invited by Mercy, let me find Mercy, and forgive me all my paſt Sins.

But then, O God of infinite Goodneſs, confirm this Mercy to me, by communicating ſuch effectual Grace to my Soul, that, for what remains of my Life, I may be faithful in this thy great Command. My Life will be no Bleſſing to me, if it be continued upon any

other Terms: For what can Addition of Days profit me, but only to be more miſerable, if it be to the Encreaſe of my Iniquity, in living on forgetful of Thee, who art the great End of my Life? Wherefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, grant me now this one Petition, that, for all the Time I have yet to ſojourn upon Earth, I may, by thy Grace, faithfully obſerve this one Precept of loving Thee, my Lord God, with all my Heart, and with all my Soul.

O God, who, beſides thy Commands, haſt furniſhed me with ſo many Motives of loving Thee, mercifully pour into my Heart the Grace of divine Love, that, with Fidelity, all my Days, I may ſatisfy this great Duty. Permit me not to lie under any Deluſion in this important Point. Let me not depend on any Proteſtation in Words, or ceremonial Profeſſions: Let me not truſt to any Sighs or Tears, or ſudden Flights of the Heart: Let me not reſt in the Practice of ſome external Devotion, or in ſenſible Comforts, or even in the Auſterities of a ſeeming Repentance: For all theſe are very uncertain Signs, and may eaſily give Hopes of the Love of God, when there is no ſuch thing at the Root. Wherefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, to deliver me here from all Miſtake. I ſincerely deſire to love Thee, even as Thou haſt commanded: Grant, O God, that I may poſſeſs this divine Treaſure; grant I may love Thee with all my Heart.

Deliver me, O God, from all violent and ſinful Paſſions. Theſe are the greateſt of all Unhappineſs, and wherever they have the Poſ-

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ſeſſion of the Heart, they generally ſhut out both the Knowledge and Love of Thee. Theſe carry the Heart to Creatures, and give them the Preference to all thy Commands. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to fence my Heart againſt all ſuch Paſſions; harden my Heart againſt all ſuch Impreſſions; give me Grace to ſtand againſt them. For behold, O my God, I am more Apprehenſive of them than of wild Beaſts, and deſire to fear them more than Death. Shew this Mercy therefore to thy poor Servant, and defend me from them. Let me never be ſubject to this Tyranny; but let my Heart be always thy Kingdom; do Thou reign and command there for ever; grant that I be ever thy Servant, and that I love Thee with all my Heart.

Deliver me likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, from all immoderate Love of any Creatures whatever. I am ſenſible how prejudical to Virtue is all Exceſs of Affection, even where Love, in a due Degree, is innocent and permitted. I know, likewiſe, infinite Numbers have been loſt, as to all Good, by being bent with too much Eagerneſs upon things of this World, and that many are ſo unhappily blinded by this worldly Spirit, as to trample upon thy Commands, and live on in the Tranſgreſſion of thy Law, while they profeſs Piety, and ſeem to have no Reaſon to ſcruple the Method in which they are. Wherefore, O God, being conſcious of my own Infirmity, I beſeech Thee to preſerve me from all ſuch immoderate Affections, and Blindneſs of Paſſion. Be Thou a

Guard to all my Deſires, and keep my Inclinations within their Bounds. Permit me not to indulge my Inclinations in any thing that is dangerous, nor to take any ſuch indiſcreet Liberties, as may be injurious to the Freedom of my Soul. I know it is my Duty to love Thee with all my Heart; undertake Thou for me, I beſeech Thee, and be my Security, that I never open my Heart to any thing that is not according to thy Will, or can prejudice the Love I am bound to have for Thee.

Deliver me, likewiſe, from all Degrees of vicious and corrupt Self-love. I am ſenſible of the many Dangers of this Evil, and how great is the Blindneſs it cauſes in Chriſtians, by leading them into many Sins, contrary to that great Duty which they have of loving Thee. Have Mercy on me, I beſeech Thee, in this Point, and be a Helper to me: Give me Grace to diſcern all the Subtleties of this Evil, and Strength to ſtand againſt them. Permit me not to flatter thoſe Inclinations in myſelf, which are corrupt, and cannot be favoured but by raiſing an Enemy againſt my Soul. Suffer me not to be ſo unwiſe, O God, in the Concern of Eternity, as to run into Snares to encreaſe the Dangers of it, to be eager in contriving, ſeeking, and following that which will be my Ruin. And will it not be thus, if I make it my daily Buſineſs to indulge that which Thou haſt commanded me to deny? I profeſs, O God, my Choice and Deſire is to love Thee with all my Heart, as Thou haſt commanded; let it therefore be the Effect of thy holy Grace,

Grace, that I never love that which is contrary to Thee.

Deliver me, likewiſe, from all other Corruption and Infirmity; at leaſt, ſo far, that I never permit any one whatever to grow upon me, ſo as to have the Command of my Will, and to lead my Soul Captive after it. All Kinds of Paſſions, I know, if not prevented by due Care, threaten me with this Subjection; and if I give Way to any of them, it cannot be expected, that thy holy Love ſhall long have the Command of my Heart. Be Thou therefore to me a powerful Helper, and ſince my Profeſſion is, to love Thee, my God, with all my Soul, give me Grace that I may be ever watchful againſt all Kinds of Paſſions and corrupt Inclinations, which are contrary to this my Duty. Grant that I may reſiſt them faithfully, and give me Perſeverance, that I never be tired, but hold on with Patience in this Warfare, on which my eternal Crown depends. Grant me that true Wiſdom, that I may diſcern them under all their Diſguiſes, and never favour that which is Evil, upon its pretending to be innocent. I confeſs my Weakneſs, in being ſubject to be deceived many Ways; but let thy Mercy now watch over me, and preſerve me from all Deluſion, that ſo thy holy Love may for ever have the Command of my Soul.

Deliver me, likewiſe, from all immoderate Solicitude, and from too great Engagement in wordly Buſineſs. I know how this diſſipates

the Mind, takes it off from the Thoughts of Thee, and waſtes all the Spirits upon Earth; ſo that the Soul has neither Reliſh nor Life for what belongs to Heaven. Give, therefore, O God, to thy Servant that true Moderation, as to all worldly Concerns, that, while Neceſſity obliges me to the World, I may not, however, engage ſo far, as to be robbed of that Liberty of Spirit which is neceſſary for the Service and Love of Thee. I very well apprehend the Narrowneſs of my own Heart, and that I cannot apply it with Eagerneſs to any one Thing, but it will be wanting to others. How then can I pretend, O God, to love Thee with all my Heart and Mind, if Thou doſt not mercifully preſerve me from that Exceſs of worldly Affairs which poſſeſs, engage, and wholly take up the Mind? Grant, therefore, that I may be ſo moderate, as to all things of Earth, that my whole Heart, my whole Mind and Strength may have all the Freedom neceſſary for the Love of Thee.

Deliver me likewiſe, O God, from a lazy and ſlothful Mind; from all Tepedity, from Melancholy, Exceſs of Sadneſs, and Dejection of Spirit: For theſe cannot poſſeſs the Heart, but it muſt be in great Danger of loſing Thee. Wherefore, O God, ſince Thou haſt commanded me to love Thee with all my Heart, mercifully preſerve my Heart free from all thoſe Weakneſſes which indiſpoſe it for ſatisfying this great Precept. Grant me a lively and induſtrious Spirit, a chearful, vigorous, and

and courageous Mind, that I may faithfully perform whatever Thou haſt commanded, ſuffer with Perſeverance whatever Thou haſt appointed, and be ever ready in all that thy holy Love demands me.

Permit not, O Lord, my Heart to be drawn away from Thee, by the immoderate Love of Company, Diverſiſements, or Entertainments. I am ſenſible theſe are ſo many Snares, and no Man can be fond of Them without falling under a manifold Guilt; how then can I love Thee with all my Heart, if I am in love with ſuch things as take my Heart from Thee? Preſerve me, therefore, O God, out of this Snare, and give me that true Wiſdom, that, being obliged to uſe many things, I may always keep within the Bounds of Moderation, and never run into ſinful Extremes, under the Pretext of doing what is neceſſary. Keep me, O God, amidſt all the Dangers of this Life; and though, for my Exerciſe, there are many things which ſolicit; yet ſtill, I beſeech Thee, fence my Soul againſt all ſuch falſe Charms, and let my Heart be reſerved for Thee.

And ſince Thou, O God, haſt declared, that whoſoever has not a true Love for his Neighbour, cannot have a true Love for Thee; mercifully preſerve in me this Charity to every Neighbour, ſuch as Thou haſt commanded. Permit no Malice or Ill-will to aibde in my Heart. Let no Averſions or Reſentments lie there concealed: But may I freely forgive all Injuries, as I deſire to be

forgiven; and have a Heart ready to do Good to all, without any Reſerve. Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all Deceit or Miſtake in this important Point, and permit me not here to be falſe to my Neighbour, and to myſelf. I can have no Hopes here where Thou haſt ſpoken ſo plain, if I obſerve not what Thou haſt ſaid. Grant, therefore, O merciful God, that I may love my Neighbour as Thou preſcribeſt; for, without this, I cannot love Thee, as Thou commandeſt; and how then can I ever hope to ſee thy Face?

Look down, I beſeech Thee, upon me, thy poor Servant; and ſince I muſt be for ever an unhappy Creature, if I love Thee not with all my Heart, have Pity on me in the difficult Circumſtances in which I am. When I conſider with myſelf the many Motives I have to love Thee, and how great an Intereſt I have in loving Thee, I then ſeem to wonder at thoſe who unworthily forſake their God, and reſolve with myſelf, that nothing ſhall ever take my Heart from Thee. But then, O God, ſuch is my Weakneſs, behold, I confeſs it to Thee; other Thoughts no ſooner occur to my Mind, but it is with Prejudice to my former Reſolution; I preſently become unmindful of Thee, and there is nothing to which I can turn, but all ſeems to conſpire to the Overthrow of all my good Deſigns. Buſineſs ſeizes my Mind with too much Eagerneſs: Idleneſs takes off the Vigour of it, and expoſes it to all that is unprofitable.

Com-

Company diſſipates my Thoughts, and Solitude often draws them into very impertinent Amuſements. Mirth makes them light and unfixed, and Sadneſs often brings them into Bonds. The World fills my Mind with Vanities; and endleſs Temptations, with great Blindneſs, are the Effects of converſing with it: And, if I think of ſeparating from its common Ways, here too are other Difficulties to perplex my Thoughts.

Then, O God, how unſettled is my Heart, and how very eaſy in receiving Impreſſions from all Kinds of Objects, ſuch as are a Temptation to it, and ſet it at a Diſtance from Thee, my God? The very Neceſſities of Life furniſh Matter for daily Temptations. There is Temptation in what pleaſes, and likewiſe in what diſpleaſes. Peace and Trouble, Plenty and Want, Sickneſs and Health, Friends and Enemies have all their Temptations in them. And what can I, a poor Creature, do, amidſt ſo many Difficulties, if Thou, O God, doſt not eſtabliſh my Heart, and, amidſt ſuch Variety of Diſturbances, keep it fixed to its eternal Good? Help me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, O merciful God, and grant that I may truly love Thee. Grant that the true Love of Thee may rule and command my Heart; ſo that though many Things endeavour to diſtract it, yet may it ſtill be fixed to thy holy Will, and uſe no other Liberty, but as Thou art pleaſed to preſcribe it. Let this holy Love govern all my Deſires and Fears: Let this teach me what I am to

ſeek, and what to avoid: Let this regulate both my Joy and my Tears: Let this preſide in all my Councils, and nothing be undertaken but as this ſhall direct.

By this Love of Thee, my God, may my Soul be fixed againſt all that natural Inconſtancy to which it is ſubject; and by the ſame may it be ſecured againſt all Temptations. By this holy Influence may it be perfected in that neceſſary Leſſon of deſpiſing the World, and not being ſolicitous what Part it has in it, but only of doing what is pleaſing in thy Sight. May this holy Flame ever warm my Breaſt, ſo that I no more become cold or tepid, in whatever concerns thy Honour or Service; but let a diſcreet Zeal give Life to my Soul, that I may be vigorous in every Duty, faithfully keep all thy Commandments, and, neither by my Sloth, Connivance or Silence, ſhew any Favour to what is ſinful. Let this holy Fire conſume in my Heart, all vain, corrupt, and dangerous Affections; let me no more be concerned in pleaſing the World, ſeeking its Favour, or gaining its Eſteem. Let me no more waſte my Soul in following the Suggeſtions of my own idle and vile Inclinations; nor think it any Happineſs to flatter and gratify the Deſires of Fleſh and Blood.

Grant, I beſeech Thee, O merciful God, this my Petition; for, ſince there can be no Hopes of Happineſs, but to thoſe alone who love Thee; what true Comfort can I poſſibly have, even in this Life, if I love not Thee? what a Confuſion muſt it be to my Soul, if I find

find it wholly taken up with this World, that by this are moved all its Desires and Fears; that in the Service of this are employed both its Thoughts, its Concerns and Solicitude; and that in this is the Happiness it seeks! Is it not too plain, that this loving the World, and worshipping it as an Idol, instead of Thee, my God? Where then can my Hopes be? O blessed God, deliver me from this Idolatry. Take the World, I beseech Thee, out of my Heart, and take Thou the Possession of it; raise there thy Throne, and command there, as Thou dost in Heaven, as sovereign Lord. Being created by Thee, let me serve Thee; being created for Thee, let me seek Thee; being redeemed by Thee, for the regaining the Happiness I had lost, let me love Thee. Grant, O God, that by this Love I may be governed, and that I may give Proof of this Love abiding in my Heart, by seeking Thee before all Things, and faithfully walking all my Days in thy Commandments.

O God, by whose particular Grace *Noah* and *Lot* continued just and faithful to Thee, in the midst of a wicked Generation; grant that, by a like Mercy, I may be preserved from the Corruption of the World, and faithfully serve Thee all the Days of my Life.

O God, by whose Grace *Moses* renounced all the Advantages of *Pharaoh*'s Court, and chose to be afflicted with thy People, before the Pleasures of Sin; grant I may give thy holy Will the Preference to this World, and rather chuse to be deprived of all temporal Conveniencies,

niences, than do any Thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee.

O God, who didſt ſhew thy Judgments on *Heli*'s Sons, for conſulting their own Intereſt above thy Law; mercifully grant, that no Love of Intereſt, or any other Paſſion, may prevail in my Heart; but that thy holy Will and Love may ſo abſolutely there command, that it may be wholly ſubject; and nothing be regarded which is not preſcribed or approved by Thee.

O God, who didſt give Grace to *David* to ſerve Thee with a perfect Heart, and, amidſt the Diſtractions of a Court, to be a Man according to thy own Heart; grant that no worldly Buſineſs may draw my Heart from Thee; but, amidſt all the Diſſipations and Temptations of this Life, I may ever abide faithful in the Obſervance of thy Law.

O God, by whoſe Grace thoſe good Kings, *Hezekias* and *Joſias*, did overthrow all the high Places, break in Pieces the Idols, and root out of the Land whatever was injurious to thy Worſhip, and was a Breach of thy Commands; mercifully grant that I may be armed with a like Zeal againſt all that is in my Heart contrary to thy Law; that I may overthrow every Idol; that I may worſhip, follow and ſerve Thee alone, my Lord and my God, and love Thee with all my Soul.

O God, who didſt permit ſuch Blindneſs in the People that came to inhabit the Land of *Iſrael*, as to undertake to ſerve Thee, and,

and, at the ſame Time, to worſhip their Idols; grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may never fall under the Blindneſs of this People, in pretending to love Thee, and yet have my Heart engaged to many Idols. Let all Idols be confounded, and Thou alone be my God.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who haſt publiſhed this great Commandment to us, of loving God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Strength, and with all our Mind: Look upon me, a poor weak Creature, and, by the Merits of thy ſacred Paſſion, obtain for me Grace that I may be always ſolicitous to obſerve this Precept, and that I may never deceive myſelf with the Hopes of Salvation, if my Heart, upon good Examination, does not bear Teſtimony of thy holy Love abiding and commanding in it.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt declared to us our Duty; that we are to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs; grant I may faithfully follow thy Direction; that I may not deceive myſelf with repeated and cuſtomary Profeſſions of loving Thee? But that, in this Point, I may give Proof that I love Thee, by making it the firſt and greateſt Buſineſs of my whole Life, to come to the Poſſeſſion of Thee. Grant, O *Jeſus*, that I may thirſt after thy Preſence; that I may deſire Thee above all Things; that I may ſeek Thee before all Things, and that I may not live but for Thee, and in Thee.

O *Jeſus*,

O *Jeſus*, who haſt declared to us, That no Man can ſerve two Maſters; that we cannot ſerve God and Mammon; mercifully deliver me from all Deluſion in this Affair; and, ſince my Heart muſt be the Servant of that which it loves, take out of my Heart, I beſeech Thee, the Love of the World, and of all that is in it. Let this be reſerved for Thee alone, that, loving Thee above all Things, I may ſerve only Thee, my God.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt poſitively pronounced, that he who loves Thee keeps thy Commandments; grant that I may have this comfortable Aſſurance all my Life of thy Love abiding in me. Never ſuffer me to be ſo blind as to live in the Breach of thy Precepts, and yet ſeemingly to be perſuaded that I love Thee. Words, Proteſtations, and Prayers are no Proof that I love Thee, if I am not careful in keeping thy Law.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt publiſhed this Truth, That he who loves Father or Mother, Huſband or Wife, Children or Lands, more than Thee, is not worthy of Thee; mercifully grant that all Love to Creatures may be ſo diſcreetly moderated in me, that it may be, in every Particular, ſubject to thy Law. Grant that I may have this Satisfaction, that I love Thee above all Things; that my greateſt Solicitude and Study is to pleaſe Thee above all other Things; and that I prefer thy holy Will, and thy Intereſt before all others. This Aſſurance may I ever have of thy Love ruling in my Heart.

O *Jeſus*,

O *Jeſus*, who didſt give Grace to thy Apoſtles, to forſake all Things for the Love of Thee, and haſt declared, that, only upon this Condition, we can become thy Diſciples: Let it be the Effect of thy Mercy to me, that I fulfil this Condition. Let my Heart be ſo diſengaged from all Creatures, that however I may uſe them, according to the Neceſſities of Life; yet I may be always ready to quit them whenever Thou commandeſt, and may ever have my Inclinations to them over-ruled by thy boly Will.

O *Jeſus*, by whoſe particular Grace, *Paul*, thy Apoſtle, did eſteem all the Things of this World as moſt contemptible Dung, for the great Love he had for Thee; grant, I beſeech Thee, I may have ſuch a Taſte of thy Sweetneſs, that I may think it no Loſs to loſe all Things of this World ſo I can but gain Thee. Grant, I may be crucified to the World, may be dead to the World, and that I may live to Thee alone.

O *Jeſus*, who didſt ſo powerfully draw the Heart of this thy Apoſtle to Thee, that he deſired to be diſſolved, and be united to Thee; grant that the ſame holy Love may truly poſſeſs my Heart, and that my ſtrongeſt Deſires may be to come to thy holy Preſence. What have I to deſire on Earth, who have a loving God, that calls me to the Poſſeſſion of himſelf? Why ſhould my Heart rove amongſt Creatures, who have a merciful God, that invites me to him? What is all on Earth, but Corruption and Vanity; and is it not enough

enough to confound Thee, my Soul, to ſee thou art ſo taken up with theſe, that Thou liveſt almoſt in the Forgetfulneſs of him, who offers to be thy infinite and never failing Good? Obſerve by thy Ways, thy Motions, thy Concerns, thy Deſires, thy daily Thoughts and Solicitude: How are theſe every Day waſted on Trifles and Vanity; and how little is it thou employeſt them in ſeeking thy God? And how long, O God, ſhall I be thus blind and miſerable! How long! O bleſſed *Jeſus*, have Compaſſion on me, I beſeech Thee, and manifeſt now both thy Goodneſs and Power in me, a poor ſinful Creature. Turn my Heart from the Things of this World, and draw it ſtrongly to Thee. Permit me no longer to loſe myſelf amongſt Things falſe and deceitful, but now, from this Moment convince me, that Thou art my only Good; that Thou alone art worthy to be ſerved and loved; and thus all Things beſides are nothing but Vanity and Affliction of Spirit. O merciful God, grant me this Petition, that, for what remains of my Life, I may ſincerely love Thee, faithfully ſerve Thee, and ever look upon it, as my only Happineſs, to come to the Poſſeſſion of Thee.

PRAY-

PRAYER.

I AM ſenſible, O God, that Prayer is a Means appointed by Thee, by which we are to ſeek Help of thy infinite Goodneſs, for the Remedy of all our Wants, both in preventing or removing Evils, and obtaining all Good.

I know likewiſe, that whilſt Thou promiſeſt to hear thoſe that pray, as they ought, Thou haſt declared thy Averſion to ſuch as do otherwiſe, and that theſe ſhall not obtain what they aſk.

I know again, that to pray as I ought, I am to have a Senſe of thy infinite Majeſty; and therefore, as often as I appear before Thee, it ought to be with great *Reverence*, as becomes thy Preſence. I am to have a Confidence in thy Goodneſs, and therefore am to pray with *Hope*. I am to have a true Senſe of my Wants, and of my Dependence on Thee alone; and therefore am to pray with *Earneſtneſs*, *Fervour*, and *Attention*. I am to be poſſeſſed with the Knowledge of my own Unworthineſs; and therefore am to pray with great *Humility*. I am to have a Heart, not engaged in wilful Sin; but ſincerely deſirous of forſaking all Evils, to which it is unhappily ſubject; becauſe I have thy own Word, that Thou doſt not hear Sinners.

All this I cannot but acknowledge: I confeſs, theſe are Truths which I know. And theſe

theſe oblige me to confeſs other Truths which are already known to Thee, my God; Truths which diſcover my great and manifold Miſery, and foretell ſtill greater Miſery, if thy Goodneſs does not mercifully prevent it.

For is it not one great Unhappineſs in me, that I often come before Thee, without any Senſe of thy Preſence; and therefore with as little inward or outward Reverence, as if, like an Idol of the Gentiles, Thou hadſt neither Goodneſs to relieve our Wants, nor Power to puniſh our Neglects? When I conſider the Homage paid to thy infinite Majeſty by the Bleſſed above; that thoſe glorious Spirits fall down before thy Throne, giving Honour, and Praiſe, and Benediction to thy holy Name; that the Cherubims vail their Faces, and the Pillars of Heaven tremble in thy Preſence: Then I apprehend ſomething of my Miſery, and how criminal it muſt be in me, a poor, vile, and contemptible Worm, to appear ſo often before Thee, and yet ſo ſtupid and unthinking, as neither by my own Unworthineſs, nor thy holy Preſence, to be awed into any Reſpect. How long, O God, how long ſhall I be thus without Senſe and Underſtanding, and loſe all the Opportunities of obtaining the Helps of thy Mercy, without which I muſt certainly periſh!

It is another great Reproach to my Soul, that preſenting myſelf ſo often before Thee, and pretending to be miſerable under the many Wants I ſuffer, and, upon this Account,

to

to aſk Relief of thy infinite Goodneſs, I no ſooner am in thy Preſence, but immediately I loſe the Senſe of Thee, and of all my Wants: My Mind is filled with a thouſand impertinent Thoughts, and ſo very buſy, as if I came before Thee, for no other End, but inſolently to let Thee know, that I had nothing to ſay to Thee. What other Conſtruction can be put upon the undue Liberty, in Time of Prayer, I give to my Thoughts; when every Trifle then takes Place of Thee, my God, and no Imagination is ſo vain and impertinent, but it is enough, (how ſhall I ſay it?) it is enough to thruſt Thee out of my Mind? And what then muſt be ſaid of that baſer Treachery, when, in Words addreſſing my Speech to Thee, I am at the ſame Time, unworthily entertaining the Devil in my Heart, or, at leaſt, receiving Propoſals from him of all, that is vain, idle and diſpleaſing to Thee? And how often, O God, have I deſerved to be driven out of the Temple with many Scourges upon this Account?

And, if, ſometimes I am ſo preſent with myſelf, as to think of what I ſay to Thee in Prayer, is it not again another Fault, that I do this ſo coldly, and with ſo little Earneſtneſs, that I ſeem not concerned, whether thou heareſt my Prayers, or granteſt what I aſk? This ſhews too plainly, that I have not a true Senſe of my many Miſeries; ſince coming with my Petitions to Thee, who art my only Helper, I preſent them to Thee with ſo very little Concern. Earneſt Deſires, I know,

know, expreſs themſelves earneſtly in Prayer; and they, that deſire nothing, pray for nothing. What then do I, unhappy Creature, ſhew in my tepid and ſlothful Prayers, but that I am not ſerious, in deſiring what I aſk?

Then, again, beſides the many Diſtractions and ſlothful Performance of my Prayers, how great Sloth is there in coming to them! How many Delays, how frequent Hindrances! Very often Sleep robs me of my Time: Idle Converſation takes it from me: Divertiſements and Company have the Preference: Impertinent Buſineſs puts in, and takes the Place: And how many put-offs by meer Lazineſs, upon the Pretext of *Time-enough*, till there be no Time that can be ſpared from other Affairs? Thus, I muſt own, it is too often with me, and every Thing is enough to put by this Duty.

And now, O God, being thus miſerable, as I am; miſerable in ſo great an Affair on which depends all the Help I am to expect from Thee: What muſt I do, but now this once, at leaſt, endeavour to pray as I ought; and, in this Prayer, beg thy Aſſiſtance, that for the Future I may be more careful in the Performance of this Exerciſe; and that, as often as I appear in thy Preſence, it may be with due Reverence to thy infinite Majeſty, with a firm Hope in thy Goodneſs, with a fervent Deſire of obtaining what I aſk, and with a Heart watchful againſt all Diſtractions, that ſo my daily Prayer, aſcending like Incenſe

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in thy Sight, may become as a daily Sacrifice, and be favourably received by Thee.

O God, who haſt ordained Prayer for our Help, and commanded us to pray; I beſeech Thee ſo to prepare my Heart, that I may perform this Exerciſe in ſuch a Manner as may be acceptable to Thee, and effectual for the obtaining of all that Grace which Thou knoweſt to be neceſſary for me.

Poſſeſs my Soul with a ſacred Awe of thy Preſence, that, whenever I come before Thee, my Heart may have a true Senſe of thy infinite Power, of thy Greatneſs and Goodneſs; and hence may a due Reverence accompany me in all my Prayers. May I then remember, that I am before my God; before him who alone has Power to caſt down to Hell, and to raiſe to Life Eternal: Before him who puniſhes thoſe that deſpiſe him with everlaſting Confuſion; and offers himſelf to be their Inheritance, who ſeek him with an humble Heart.

May I then remember, that I am before a God of infinite Majeſty, in whoſe Preſence the Heavens are not pure; that the Cherubims and Seraphims, the Dominations and Powers, with all the heavenly Hoſt, fall down before him; and how then am I, miſerable Clay, a poor, unhappy Sinner, to appear in his Preſence.

May I then remember, that I come a Criminal before my God and my Judge, whom I have moſt ungratefully offended; and therefore come with *Trembling:* That I deſerve rather

ther to be rejected with Puniſhment and Shame, than to have my Petitions favourably received; and therefore come with *Fear:* That, if I obtain not the Grant of what I aſk, I muſt be for ever miſerable; and therefore come with *Solicitude.*

Let theſe Thoughts, I beſeech Thee, work in my Breaſt, and prepare my Heart as often as I pray; that I may be ſolicitous to behave myſelf outwardly with due Reverence, and inwardly with great Attention of Mind, whenever I come into thy holy Temple, or, in my Cloſet, offer my Petitions to Thee.

Wherefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, ſo to confirm me in the perpetual Senſe of this my Duty, that I may never do any Thing in Time of Prayer, which may be diſedifying, and look like Diſreſpect. Let my Poſture be always decent, as becomes an Offender offering his Petition to his God: Let a fixed Mind keep my Body ſteady, that I may not be gazing about, nor turning to every Thing that moves. Imprint in my Soul a Fear of converſing and talking there where my only Buſineſs is to ſpeak to Thee. And grant, I may have a Horror of all Kinds of Curioſity, which being ſuggeſted by Vanity, Idleneſs, or other Corruption, can ſerve for nothing but to draw my Heart from Thee, my God, and lead it into Sin.

Grant, likewiſe, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, that the Attention of my Mind may be ſuch, in Time of Prayer, as becomes this holy

holy Exerciſe, and may render it acceptable to Thee. Deliver me then from all Kinds of vain and impertinent Imaginations; give me Grace to put by, for that Time, all Manner of Buſineſs; let no Sort of Contrivance take up my Thoughts; baniſh then from my Heart all Degrees of worldly Care and Solicitude; quiet all Diſturbance; and, if the Devil ſhall endeavour to perplex my Mind with any Thing that is ſinful, grant, O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may readily, and with Reſolution, make Reſiſtance againſt it, and with new Life turn all my Thoughts to Thee.

For this End, I aſk of Thee, loving Father, to give me a watchful Mind, that I may not permit myſelf to be ſurprized and carried away with vain Amuſements, much leſs, O God, with ſinful or dangerous Entertainments; but that I may be ever ready, upon their firſt Approach, to proteſt againſt them, and remove them out of my Mind.

It is a melancholy Reflection, I confeſs, at the End of Prayers, to find, that, coming there to ſpeak to Thee, I have been thinking of every Thing elſe beſides Thee: That my Mind has been wandering all Ways; and that, if I have had any Glimpſe of thy Preſence, it has ſoon been put by with the next Imagination that occurred. This I cannot think of without Shame; and this my Weakneſs, I confeſs, is a Confuſion to me, when, by the Help of thy Grace, I with ſerioufneſs look back upon it.

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It is true, I often purpoſe to do better, and begin with ſuch a ſeeming Reſolution as if nothing ſhould be able to diſturb me; but, O God, ſuch is my floating and unſteady Mind, that I preſently loſe the Sight of Thee, the only Object of my Prayer, and Earth ſoon becomes my Buſineſs inſtead of Heaven. This Weakneſs I heartily wiſh I could remedy, becauſe it is ſo diſhonourable to Thee, my God, and ſo very injurious to my only great Concern. Help me, therefore, moſt gracious God, in this Point, that I may pray as I ought, and that, while I come into thy Preſence, I may not ſo eaſily and ſo often turn my Back moſt unworthily upon Thee.

Take off this Lightneſs from my Mind, that it may be more ſteady in what it undertakes; that it may no more be ſo giddy as to take Notice of every flying Fancy, and let this be enough to carry it away from its greateſt Buſineſs, and even from its God. If a Servant ſhould, upon ſuch Trifles, quit any Buſineſs of Moment which I had recommended to him, how ſhould I be provoked! And yet, while this is my daily Practice, I call myſelf thy Servant, and pretend to be faithful to Thee. Remedy, O God, this Careleſſneſs, this Inconſtancy: Work this Change in my Soul, that I may amend what I cannot bear in others without Anger, nor ſee in myſelf without Shame.

Let my Heart be fixed on Thee, I beſeech Thee, in Time of Prayer; and may I then be convinced that my only Buſineſs is with Thee,

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my God; that whatever elſe occurs is, at that Time, no better than Impertinencies and Trifles, ſuch as deſerve not to be regarded; and that, if I attend to them, I unworthily forſake my Cauſe. For this End, I earneſtly beg of Thee, to take from me all Kinds of Solicitude and Diſquiets, and compoſe my Mind; that, being free from a reſtleſs and roving Spirit, I may, with Peace and Attention, ſend up my Deſires to Heaven, and, with Freedom of Mind, converſe with Thee, my God.

Not that I can hope, in this imperfect State, to be totally free from Diſtractions. I know my own Corruption and the Malice of the Devil will not give this Reſt; but mercifully grant, that I may not wilfully be carried away with their Suggeſtions, nor weakly give Entertainment to any Thoughts or Temptations that then come to diſturb me. No, my God, far be this from me: What I aſk is, that Thou then ſtand by me, and confirm me againſt all Kinds of Diſtractions; that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may reſolutely caſt them from me, and as often recal my Thoughts to Thee. In this, O God, let me never be tired; for though there be no Comfort in ſuch Prayer, where the Mind is perplexed with frequent Diſturbances; yet, to be couragious and patient, in making Defence againſt them, is a good Chriſtian's Part, and ſuch as will recommend him to thy favourable Protection. O God, in this may I always be conſtant.

Another Favour I aſk of Thee, O Father of Mercy, that, as often as I come to Prayer, I may not only have a recollected Mind, but likewiſe ſuch a Fervour of Spirit, as may give Life to my Petitions, and render them acceptable in thy Sight. Remove therefore, I beſeech Thee, all Heavineſs and Coldneſs from me, and let me always remember, that, if I am not earneſt in aſking, I cannot expect from Thee to grant what I aſk.

I confeſs it, O God, to be a great Stupidity to have a Buſineſs of Eternity upon my Hands, and yet to manage and ſolicit it with ſo much Coldneſs, as if it were a Matter of Indifferency which Way it went. And it is yet more ſurpriſing, to be in Danger of periſhing everlaſtingly, and yet to aſk for Help with no more Concern, than if there were no Inconvenience in being denied. This, I own, is too often my Caſe; and now, O God, I aſk thy Grace, that I may no longer go on thus unhappy, and yet ſo inſenſible of my Unhappineſs, as there to be careleſs and unconcerned from whence is to be expected my only Help.

I beſeech Thee, that the Senſe of thy awful Preſence, who haſt equal Power both to reward and puniſh, may raiſe up my cold and tepid Soul; and that, as often as it lies dull and heavy in Time of Prayer, it may be quickened by the Thoughts of Eternity, whoſe Lot cannot fall well if there be no more Care in preventing a Miſcarriage.

For,

For, what canſt thou do, my Soul, under all that Corruption, thoſe manifold Infirmities, the Weight of thy paſt Sins, and the continual Danger of falling into new ones? Haſt thou any Help or Confidence in thyſelf? Alas! my God, what am I? I confeſs my whole and only Expectation is from Thee alone; and I here, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, implore thy Grace, that, as often as I come to pray, the Knowledge of this undoubted Truth may give Force to my Prayers; and that, ſhaking off all Kinds of Sloth, I may earneſtly deſire and fervently aſk thy Help.

I eaſily obſerve with how great Importunity they aſk for Relief, who feel the Want of Neceſſaries for Life. I cannot but ſee with how true a Concern I cry out for Help, when any Kind of worldly Danger threatens. Nay, I muſt confeſs, I find myſelf eager, lively, and vigorous in all the Affairs of Earth. In Buſineſs I am earneſt; in Family-Concerns I am lively; in all Things of Intereſt I am ſolicitous; in following the World and its Modes I am induſtrious; in gaining my own private Ends I am watchful; in gratifying my Inclinations and Appetite I take Pains; in purſuing my Games and Divertiſements I am eager: Thus, whatever Way I turn, as to this World, I ſee I want no Life or Vigour; and only then, O God, when I come before Thee, when I come to pray, then only am I dull and heavy, and ſeem like a lifeleſs Clod.

And what a Reproach, O bleſſed God, what a criminal Reproach muſt this be to my Soul, when, at the laſt Hour, it ſhall be preſented before Thee, if thy Mercy does not remedy this my Weakneſs! Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God of Mercy, and give me a true Senſe of all my ſpiritual Wants; that, whenever I come before Thee, whoſe Goodneſs encourages us to aſk, I may beg for the Bleſſings of Eternity with greater Importunity, than they who beg for Bread. Grant I may have a true Apprehenſion of the Danger of Hell-fire; and that my Petitions, for being delivered, may have ſuch Fervour in them as may bear ſome Proportion to the Greatneſs of the Evil. Poſſeſs my Soul with the true Value of all that is Eternal, and that my daily Solicitude in ſeeking it may exceed all that which I experience in myſelf, every Day, in temporal Affairs; and permit me not, I beſeech Thee, any longer, to be lively and vigorous in following Trifles, and there only to be without Life where Eternity is concerned. Grant this my Petition, O merciful God, that my Conſcience may no longer lie under the Reproach of my uſual Sloth and Injuſtice.

But if, by the ſecret Counſel of thy Providence, Thou ſhalt, at any Time, leave my Soul dry and barren, ſo that, notwithſtanding all my Endeavours, it ſhall ſtill continue without Comfort, bleſſed be thy Name under this Diſpenſation; but mercifully, at that Time, I be-

I beſeech Thee to ſupport my Soul, that it fall not into Impatience or Dejection, nor admit any Thoughts of deſiſting from the Exerciſe of Prayer, upon the Apprehenſion of its being fruitleſs. No, my God, let me look upon all theſe Suggeſtions as the Temptations of the Enemy, and therefore have no farther Regard to them than to lay them by. And, for the Duty of Prayer, grant I may be ever conſtant in it, even when void of all Comfort, and that Thou ſeemeſt neither to bleſs my Endeavours, nor to give ear to my Petitions: For I know that, even then, my Deſires, my Sighs, my Patience, and my Endeavours may be very acceptable before Thee, when Thou ſeemeſt to be far from me, and I can find no Reliſh in all I do. As often, therefore, as Thou ſhalt permit me to fall under this Trial, I beſeech Thee, to have Compaſſion on my Weakneſs, and grant me, at that Time, great Patience and Diſcretion, that ſo I may make Advantage by what I ſuffer.

Another Petition I moſt humbly make to Thee, O God, to defend me from the Sin of the Phariſees, that I never deſire to be ſeen at my Prayers, ſo as to think of being eſteemed by Men on this Account, and feed my Vanity with that which ought to be a pure Offering to Thee. This muſt be a ſtrange Preſumption for Self-love thus to take Coals and Incenſe from the Altar; and as ſtrange a Madneſs, there to provoke thy Diſpleaſure, and offend Thee, where I pretend to ſue for

Mercy. Strengthen me therefore, I beſeech Thee, by thy Grace, that, being ever watchful againſt all the Approaches of this Phariſaical Evil, I may carefully ſuppreſs it, and direct all my Prayers purely to Thee, propoſing nothing more, beſides the Glory of thy holy Name, and opening the Treaſures of thy Goodneſs upon my Soul, for the Relief of thoſe my manifold Neceſſities to which I am ſubject.

Grant, likewiſe, that my great and principal Solicitude, in Time of Prayer, may be to pray well, and not to huddle over ſuch a Number of Prayers, as if the Number and Length of them were the only Things to which Thou hadſt any Regard. Rather let it be my conſtant Care, that my Prayer aſcend like Incenſe from an humble Heart; and that whatever I do be done well; for Thou, O God, haſt given me ſufficient Encouragement in this, in declaring thy Acceptance of the ſlender Offering of a Pair of Turtles from their Hands, whoſe narrow Circumſtances will not permit them to lay on thy Altars a greater Sacrifice; and that a ſpotleſs Lamb is much the better Offering than many Oxen which are diſeaſed, deformed, or lame.

But, above all Things, grant, O God, I beſeech Thee, that my Heart be clean in thy Sight; and that, while I offer Prayers to Thee, I may not be under thy Diſpleaſure for any paſt or preſent Sins. Thou haſt ſufficiently declared thy Abhorrence to thoſe who honour Thee with their Lips, but have their

Hearts

Hearts far from Thee. What Fruit therefore, can I expect from appearing frequently in thy Preſence, or joining with thy Faithful in thy moſt ſolemn Worſhip, or from my Sighs, my Tears or Prayers, if my Heart, lying under the Engagements of wilful Sin, is not yet reſolved to break its Chains, and ſeek thy Mercy, by returning to a better State? All this can be no better than Mockery, ſuch as may provoke, but cannot be the Means of obtaining thy Favour.

Deliver me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, at all Times, from this Blindneſs; and, whatever my Unhappineſs may have been to offend Thee, mercifully grant, that I may not continue obſtinate in Sin, nor live on in a State which I know to be diſpleaſing to Thee: For, what can be the End of this, but Death? But, whenever I come to Prayers, let it be with a Heart ſenſible of my Iniquity, ſolicitous to be truly converted to Thee, and humbly ſuing for Mercy. If I approach with this Diſpoſition, daily lamenting all my Miſeries, and ſincerely petitioning to be ſtrengthened by thy Grace; then I cannot but hope in thy Promiſes made to thoſe that call upon Thee, and that, in the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, I ſhall find the good Effect of my Prayers.

O bleſſed God, who hadſt Reſpect to the Offering of *Abel*, and didſt receive his Sacrifice, mercifully grant, that, as often as I come to Prayers, it may be with the inward Diſpo-

ſition of *Abel*; and that, like his Offering, they may find Acceptance in thy Sight.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Moſes*, and, upon his Petition, didſt ſpare the Children of *Iſrael*; teach me, I beſeech Thee, to pray like *Moſes*, and mercifully hear my Prayer.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Samuel*, and, upon his Petition, didſt overthrow the *Philiſtines*; teach me, I beſeech Thee, to pray like *Samuel*, and hear me, as often as I beg thy Aſſiſtance to be delivered from all my Enemies.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Elias*, and, upon his Petition, didſt ſend Rain and Plenty; teach me, I beſeech Thee, to pray like *Elias*, and hear me as often as I pray for thy Bleſſings.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Hezechias*, and, upon his Petition, didſt raiſe him from Death, and add to the Number of his Days; teach me, I beſeech Thee, to pray like this good King, and give Ear to my Petitions as often as I beg Bleſſings of Thee.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Daniel*; give me Grace, that I may pray like him, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Jonah*; give me Grace, that I may pray like him, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Judith*; give me Grace, to pray like her, and hear my Prayer.

O God,

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Suſannah*; give me Grace, to pray like her, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didſt hear the Prayer of *Eſther*; give me Grace, to pray like her, and mercifully hear my Prayer.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who was pleaſed to teach thy Apoſtles how to pray, and us in them; mercifully pour forth into my Heart the true Spirit of Prayer; and grant, that as often as I ſhall ſay that holy Prayer, it may be with the Reverence due to Thee, the due Author, and repeat it with the ſame Spirit with which it was compoſed.

O *Jeſus*, who, by thy Example, haſt taught us how to pray, and, by abiding all Night in Prayer on the Mount, haſt ſhewed us the great Importance of this Exerciſe to us; mercifully grant, that, by the due Conſideration of what Thou haſt done for our Example, I may be always convinced of the Neceſſity of Prayer, and ever ſolicitous to pray as Thou haſt taught us.

O *Jeſus*, who, in thy Goſpel, haſt aſſured us of the infinite Goodneſs of thy heavenly Father, and promiſed, that they who aſk ſhall receive; grant, that I may always aſk in ſuch a Manner as to experience this Goodneſs of God, and the Truth of thy Promiſes, in the Succeſs of my Petitions, and in obtaining thoſe Bleſſings as Thou knoweſt moſt neceſſary for my eternal Good.

O *Jeſus*, who, in the Perſon of the Publican, haſt taught us how to pray; grant, I beſeech Thee, that, as often as I appear before Thee, it may be with the Reverence, the Humility, the Contrition and Fervour of this poor Penitent, and that, like him, I may find the Effect of thy Goodneſs in the Grant of my Petitions.

O *Jeſus*, who has taught us the ſure Method of prevailing with Heaven, by aſking with *Faith*, and *in thy Name*; grant, I beſeech Thee, that my Prayers may always be accompanied with a firm Faith in God, and that whatever I aſk may be with an entire Confidence in Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who, in ſeveral Parables, haſt informed us, how effectual it is to importune Heaven with inſtant Prayer; give me that Spirit of Fervour and Patience, that I may pray with Earneſtneſs, and never be tired with ſending up my Deſires to Thee. Let me always be eaſy under all thy Diſpenſations, and leave it to Thee to grant at thy Time what I aſk in mine.

O *Jeſus*, who didſt reprove the Sons of *Zebedee*, for not knowing what they aſked; mercifully grant, that I may aſk nothing but what may be to the Glory of thy Name. And, if I pray for any Thing which thou knoweſt will be injurious to my eternal Good, let it be the Effect of thy Mercy to deny me.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt undertaken to be our Advocate to the Father, grant, I may never think

think of having any Acceſs to the Father but through Thee; let my Hope of obtaining what I aſk, be entirely in the Merits of thy Paſſion. And now let thy ſacred Wounds plead for me, that I may truly underſtand this Duty of Prayer, that I may be punctual in the Practice, and always in ſuch a Manner, that it may find Acceptance in the Sight of God, to his Glory, and the Salvation of my own Soul. Obtain for me, that I be delivered from all Neglects and Tepidity, and that, for the future, I never be ſo unhappy, that my Prayer be ſo unduly performed, as to become a Sin to me.

REPENTANCE.

I Acknowledge, O God, that while I am ſo miſerable and unworthy, as to deſerve nothing but to be caſt out, and for ever baniſhed from thy Sight, thy Mercy ſtill abounds, and calls aloud after me to return from all my evil Ways, and to accept of that Happineſs which has been purchaſed for me by the Blood of thy only Son. This thy infinite Goodneſs appears wonderfully in the Offer thou makeſt to all Sinners, of receiving them into thy Favour, notwithſtanding all their paſt Unworthineſs, if they ſhall forſake their evil Ways, repent from their Heart of their Iniquities, and be ſincerely converted

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to Thee. This Mercy, O God, I acknowledge with all Humility, I bow down and adore, proſtrate to the Ground; and it is what I deſire to lay hold on, as my only Dependance, on which I build all the Hopes I have of being reſcued from the Puniſhment due to my Sins, and coming to the Poſſeſſion of Thee, my God.

But being ſenſible of my own Weakneſs, and that there are many Ways, by which I am apt to deceive myſelf; nay, having too great Reaſon to fear, that I have often deceived myſelf in this Point, and preſumed of having obtained thy Mercy, when I have performed ſome ceremonial Part, but have been far from the Truth of Repentance; therefore, O God, I come before Thee this Day, to beg Pardon for all paſt Neglects of this Kind, and, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, to implore thy gracious Aſſiſtance, that, for the Time to come, I may be ſubject to no Miſtakes in this great Affair; but that, as often as, thro' thy Grace, I propoſe to repent, and make my Peace with Thee, I may do it ſo truly from my Heart, and with that ſincere Converſion, as to obtain Pardon of my Sins, and be received into the Protection of thy Mercy.

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, in the firſt Place to open my Underſtanding by the Light of the Holy Spirit, that I may have a true Knowledge of my Sins; that I may ſee them all in their proper Deformity, with every evil Circumſtance belonging to them.

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The Experience I have had of my own deceitful Nature obliges me to preſs this Petition with Earneſtneſs. For, I confeſs, O God, that my Paſſions very often are ſo prevailing, that they blind my Underſtanding; ſo that, being engaged in ſeveral Diſorders and dangerous Indiſcretions, which are obſervable to others, I, who am moſt concerned, am the only Perſon that do not ſee them. Thus Covetouſneſs and a worldly Spirit are forward in putting a plauſible Cover upon many Frauds, upon Uſury and Injuſtice, ſo to conceal the Deformity of them from my Sight. Senſuality, Pride, and the Love of Company, diſguiſe not only Snares, but Sins; and faulty Omiſſions of all kinds of Duties are painted over with ſuch artificial Reaſon, that I very often diſcover not the Deceit.

This being one Part of my Weakneſs, how eaſy may I live on in Sin, and even then be nouriſhing within my Breaſt what is moſt diſpleaſing to Thee, when I pretend to repent of all my Sins, if Thou, O God, doſt not mercifully prevent it, by delivering me from this Blindneſs, and communicating to my Soul a better Sight? Give Ear, therefore, I beſeech Thee, to this my Petition, and, according to the Multitude of thy moſt tender Mercies, ſhew Favour to me, in the Grant of what my extreme Poverty obliges me to aſk. Bring to my Remembrance all my Iniquities, by which I have provoked thy Majeſty, and let no Sort of Paſſion put any Diſguiſe upon them. Let them be preſent before me, in their proper

per Colours, and ſuffer me not, under the Cover of Innocence or Right, to entertain any kind of Iniquity within my Heart, or go on in the Practice of what is really ſinful, or dangerous to my Soul. Grant me this Knowledge, I beſeech Thee, and, whatever otherwiſe my Ignorance may be, let me be wiſe in this one Point, that I be no longer a Secret to myſelf. O Jeſus, who art the Light of the World, remove all Darkneſs from my Soul, that, having a true Sight of my Sins, I may be ſo far prepared to repent of them, and find Mercy with Thee.

And let not this Mercy, O God, be obſtructed by my Sloth or Neglect. For I have Reaſon to fear, that many Times, influenced by theſe, I take not due Care in calling myſelf to an Account, and examining into the true State of my Conſcience; and hence many Sins may be hidden from me, which might be diſcovered by a more diligent Search. And how then can I reaſonably expect the Aſſiſtance of a divine Light, who lie under wilful Darkneſs, becauſe I will not take Pains to ſee? Such Sloth then, I muſt conſider as a great Impediment of thy Grace; it being certainly very provoking for a Soul to be then under the Command of Sloth, when it pretends itſelf a Criminal, and ought to be ſolicitous not to omit any thing which can help to the obtaining that Grace, of which it muſt own itſelf unworthy while it is ſeeking it.

Secure me likewiſe againſt the Dangers of another Extream, that is, againſt all exceſſive

ſive Solicitude in calling myſelf to an Account; for though Neglect be much the greater Fault, yet I am ſenſible, that Anxiety of Mind is a very great Hindrance, and that it is almoſt impoſſible for a Perſon to diſcover the true State of his Soul, who admits of this Diſquiet. All that is immoderate is injurious to Reaſon, and nothing more diſables it than immoderate Fear; a Paſſion which creates Monſters, and, with its ſurprizing Alarms, frights the Mind from that Quiet which is neceſſary for thinking and ſeeing Things aright. How great then muſt the Indiſcretion be, of letting this diſturbing Paſſion into the Soul, which puts all into Diſorder, and this at a Time, when a Buſineſs of Eternity is to be conſidered, and a quiet compoſed Mind is moſt neceſſary for it conſidering aright, and making a true Judgment of it?

O God, who knoweſt all my Weakneſs, have Compaſſion on me in this Point, and mercifully help me where my Infirmity proves injurious to the great Affair of my Soul. As far as I can diſcover of myſelf, I hope my Deſires both of Repentance, and of faithfully ſerving Thee, are ſincere; and I hope I neither obſtinately, nor affectedly, do any Thing which hinders the Effect of theſe my good Deſires. But if Thou, O God, ſeeſt that I deceive myſelf, and that through Pride, Humour, Affectation, or Self-conceit, I am injurious to myſelf, in the Loſs of many conſiderable Advantages to my Soul; behold I here freely renounce, and condemn them, as

Evils

Evils not to be indulged or tolerated; I humbly beſeech Thee, to give me a true Light to diſcern them, and Strength of Grace, whereby I may reſolutely and conſtantly ſtand againſt them.

Hear me, O God, I beſeech Thee, and leave me not to my own Weakneſs. So long Experience as I have had of myſelf gives me too great Reaſon to ſuſpect ſome great Fault or Indiſcretion in what I do; and what Confidence can I have in myſelf, while I know not what my Infirmity is? Behold, therefore, acknowledging my only Help to be in Thee, O God, I reſign the whole Concern of my Soul into thy Hands, without any Reſerve, and moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to do with me whatever Thou knoweſt neceſſary for my Cure. If Pride or Self-conceit be the Occaſion of my Ill-management, root them out, and mercifully deliver me from them. If Humour or Affectation lie concealed, and are a Snare to me, Thou art able to correct Them; ſay but the Word, and they will obey. If there be any other Weakneſs, help me in it, I beſeech Thee, and ſuffer it not to prevail: Let me not be ſo blind as to give Ear to its Suggeſtions, and to be governed by it, much leſs to favour it ſo, as there to refuſe the Obedience, where by thy holy Ordinance I am commanded to obey. This, I confeſs, would be a great Misfortune; for what can be more to be dreaded, than to take that for my Counſel and Guide, which I ought to fear as an Enemy, and to let this lead me contrary to thy holy Will? What

What muſt be the ill Conſequences of this Conduct, if I am ſo blind? Thou knoweſt, O God, how it is with me: Have Compaſſion therefore on me, according to my Neceſſities, and mercifully deliver me from all Blindneſs and Weakneſs whatever they be.

But beſides this, I have another Petition in this important Affair, and that is, that, whenever I ſeek for Pardon of my Sins, I may not deceive myſelf with any falſe and counterfeit Sorrow, but may have ſuch a ſincere Contrition, as may prevail with Thee for ſhewing Mercy to a poor unhappy Sinner, and receiving me into thy Favour.

This I have Reaſon to aſk with all the Powers of my Soul, becauſe I have many Fears that bring all my paſt Repentance into Doubt. Sometimes I fear, that the Confeſſion of my Sins has been without any ſerious Endeavours for being heartily ſorry for the great Offences I have committed againſt Thee. And that, all my Thoughts having been taken up in examining into the State of my Soul, I have either forgotten or neglected to beg Pardon for my Iniquities, and, by humble Contrition, to ſue for thy Mercy.

Sometimes I fear, that all my Sorrow for Sin has been no more than a Form of Words, in haſtily running over ſuch Prayers as I have found in Books, but without thinking, that true Contrition is not a Profeſſion of the Lips, but a real Change of the Heart, abhorring Sin, and converted to God; in which Part I have been ſo little ſolicitous, that there ſeems too much

much Reaſon to dread, that my Repentance has ſeldom reached the Heart.

At other Times I fear I have very much failed in this Duty, by not conſidering that true Repentance is thy Gift, O God; and, for want of duly conſidering it, have taken ſo little Pains in aſking it, that I can ſcarce think Thou haſt granted what has ſcarce been aſked. And how many other Times have I been miſtaken in this Affair, whilſt, finding a ſenſible Trouble in my Heart, I have preſently judged this to be the Sorrow of true Repentance, and hence have gone on without Scruple? But now more Experience has raiſed great Difficulties in this Point, and makes me doubt whether all that former Sorrow was any more than a natural Trouble upon the undertaking a Work, which Nature diſliked, and therefore could not be ſubmitted to without Diſturbance. And if this has been the greateſt Occaſion of my paſt Sorrow, when my Sins were to be acknowledged, how have I deceived myſelf, and how far have I been from the Trouble of an humble and contrite Heart?

There is ſtill another very conſiderable Head, upon which my paſt Repentance is brought into Queſtion. For it being now evident to me, that, where Repentance is ſincere and from the Heart, there muſt be an Abhorrence of Sin, as of the greateſt of all Evils: There muſt be ſincere Reſolutions of making War againſt it; and, in Proof of theſe Reſolutions being ſincere, theſe ought to be followed with ſuitable

ſuitable Endeavours, ſuch as, conſidering the Difficulty of the Evil, ought to be proportioned to it, and hence give reaſonable Hopes of overcoming it. This muſt be, where the Repentance is from the Heart.

And muſt it be ſo? Then, O God, how great Reaſon have I to ſuſpect what is paſt? For when I have laid open my Sins before Thee, and proteſted to have been ſorry for them, how many Times have I done this, without ever thinking afterwards how to amend them? And if ſome Times I have had ſuch good Thoughts, how ſoon have theſe vaniſhed without any Fruit? And how ſeldom can I ſay with Truth, that I have been truly ſolicitous to overcome my Evils, and contrived all Ways by which I might probably be ſecured againſt falling into them again? Alas! my frequent Relapſes, my Paſſions not yet ſubdued, the evil Cuſtoms, in which I ſtill go on, the Love of the World and of Vanity, which ſo much prevail in my Heart, the great Sloth and wilful Neglects to which I am every Day ſubject, are too plain Evidence againſt me, that I have not taken due Care to reform my Life, and, conſequently bringing it into Queſtion all former Repentance, give me Reaſon to fear, that it has been no more than counterfeit or ceremonial, but not ſincere.

Having ſo many Exceptions in this weighty Matter, upon which all depends, I think I have great Reaſon, every Day, to humble myſelf before thy divine Majeſty, in acknowledgment of all ſuch Miſcarriages; and every Day

Day to endeavour, by the moſt ſerious Repentance and ſincere Contrition, to ſupply ſuch Defects, that ſo, at the laſt Day, I may not find that great and terrible Account ſtanding in full againſt me, which indiſcreetly I preſumed to be cancelled. And, if there be ſufficient Motives for this, there muſt certainly be as great Reaſon to implore thy Grace, O God, that for the Future I go no more on under theſe Miſtakes, but that my Repentance may be every way ſincere, ſo as effectually to obtain thy Mercy.

O God, who haſt promiſed to receive all ſuch Sinners into thy Favour as ſhall forſake their evil Ways, and be truly converted to Thee: Look upon me with Mercy, and ſo ſtrengthen me by thy Grace, that, as often as I ſhall profeſs to repent of my Sins, it may be ſo truly from my Heart, as forthwith to renounce all Evil, and to undertake ſuch Methods as may be effectual againſt all Relapſes, and reſtore me to thy laſting Peace.

Let me always remember, that true Contrition of Sin is thy Gift, O God, and that I cannot expect it, except it comes from Thee. Let thy Grace then, at ſuch Times, puſh me on, and make me both earneſt in aſking it, and ſolicitous to obtain it. Suffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to be prevailed on by Sloth, or pretended Buſineſs, to omit this neceſſary Duty, or ſhorten that Time in which I am to perform it. Let nothing of the Phariſee then be found in me, ſo as to be contented with the bare Recital of Prayers, or ſtriking the Breaſt; for what

what can theſe move Thee, who haſt no Regard, but to what comes from the Heart?

But let my Heart, O God, be firſt moved, let my Heart, as the firſt great Spring, be firſt moved with the moſt earneſt Deſires of obtaining a ſincere Converſion and true Contrition from Thee, the Author of all Good. And let the Strength of this firſt great Motion move all that is depending on it; from this let my Eyes be moved, and flow with Tears; let my Breath be moved, and break forth into Sighs; let my Tongue be moved, and cry aloud to Thee in Prayer; let my Hands be moved in being lifted up to Thee; or, by ſtriking the Breaſt, give Teſtimony of that Unworthineſs, which the Heart profeſſes; let my whole Body, joining with my Soul, be moved, and, bowing down to the Ground, with a profound Humility, adore Thee, on whom its whole Good depends, and at the ſame Time acknowledge its Miſery, by which it is rendered unworthy of receiving what it aſks, and in this confeſs, that all muſt be the Effect of thy pure Mercy. Thus, O God, let Body and Soul concur, where both are equally concerned; and let both join in ſuing for Mercy, where both have been confederate in provoking thy Juſtice againſt them.

If ever I am to be in earneſt, I beſeech Thee, that I may be ſo here; becauſe I am ſenſible, that, on the Sincerity of my Contrition or Repentance, depends my eternal State. I know it will avail me nothing to acknowledge myſelf a Sinner, and

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to confeſs my manifold Iniquities before Thee, if I do not repent of them from my Heart; for all the reſt is but a Ceremony and Mockery, if this be omitted or neglected. Here then, O God, let thy ſpecial Grace move me, and let it be the Effect of this Grace, to make me not only truly ſolicitous for obtaining the Gift of Contrition from Thee, but likewiſe laborious in taking Pains for obtaining it. For to what Purpoſe will it be to be earneſt in other Things which are not of this Concern, if, coming to this, I paſs it over with Contempt, or, at leaſt, in ſuch a careleſs and ſlothful Manner, as if I had no Intereſt in its being done well?

Help me, O God, I beſeech Thee, in this Particular, and if ever Thou wilt ſhew Mercy to me, an unworthy Sinner, let it be in granting this Petition, that I may not be negligent in performing this Duty; but, by a hearty Repentance, may partake of thy Mercy, whenever, through my Unhappineſs, my Sins have divided me from Thee, my God. Suffer me not to go on with my Sins, when I undertake to repent of them; but let ſuch a real Abhorrence of my Offences poſſeſs my Heart, that I may hate them, as Things moſt hateful to Thee, and fly from them, as from the Enemies of my Soul, and the Contrivers of my Damnation.

For this End, I beſeech Thee, let the Power of thy Grace carry me on in the Ways of ſincere Repentance, and when, in the Confeſſion of my Sins, I ſeek to Thee for Mercy,

Mercy, make me then ſenſible, that it is my indiſpenſable Duty to uſe my beſt Endeavours for avoiding all Sin. Let it be then my great Solicitude, to conſider how I may avoid thoſe in particular, to which I am moſt ſubject. Let me then be convinced, that I cannot be ſincere in my Deſires and Purpoſes of avoiding Sin, if I do not avoid the Occaſions of Sin. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, then to quicken my Soul with ſuch a vigorous Grace, that I may break through all the Difficulties of Nature, of Corruption, and of Cuſtom, and with a generous Contempt, trample all that under my Feet, which puts me in Danger of relapſing into my former Sins.

Let me then remember, that all is to be given for Heaven; and that if there be any Thing I cannot forſake, for becoming faithful to Thee, it is an evident Proof, that my Humility, Confeſſion, and Repentance are all Deceit. For how can there be Sincerity, in my pretending to amend, when I ſee where all my Misfortune lies, and will not take Pains to remove it? This, I know, requires great Strength of Mind, while all, that is in me, with Violence draws the other Way. But what then, Nature muſt yield to Duty, where true Repentance commands the Heart; and, whatever the Struggle be, nothing muſt be tolerated which is not conſiſtent with the Amendment propoſed.

For

For how can I with Truth ſay, that I love God, and will be faithful to him, if there be any Thing criminal ſo pleaſing to me, that I will not renounce it, or not take the Pains to overcome it, tho' I ſee, it almoſt daily is the Occaſion of my offending God? It is too true, in this Caſe, I cannot deny it; whatever my Profeſſion of Repentance be, I do not repent; and tho' I ſay, I love God, I am in Reality ſo far from loving him, that he is not a God to me; but that Thing I make my God, which I love above God, and for the Sake of which I am diſobedient to the Will of God, and tranſgreſs his Law. This is my Idol; and muſt not this be a dreadful State, to be then committing Idolatry, when I pretend to repent of my Iniquities, and to make my Peace with Thee?

O God, I beſeech Thee, let thy powerful Grace prevent in me this Abomination; let me never have a Part in this deteſtable Hypocriſy; for it muſt be much the leſſer Evil, to die in my Sins, than thus to add to my Iniquities, by Lying and Deceit, and by ſacrilegiouſly abuſing thy Tribunal of Mercy. But, O moſt gracious Fountain of Goodneſs, let neither of theſe be my unhappy Fate; but let thy Grace ſo touch my Heart, that I may not only propoſe a true Repentance, but undertake it in Earneſt, and carry it on with that Reſolution and Conſtancy, as not to deſiſt, till I have broken all my Chains, ſubdued my Enemies, and brought my whole Life to the Model of thy Goſpel.

For

For effecting this great Work, let my Dependance be not in myſelf, but in Thee, my God, who alone art able to help me. Give me therefore, I beſeech Thee, that true Chriſtian Reſolution, which will neither be tired nor diſcouraged with Difficulties, but will every Day be renewed for accompliſhing the Work it has undertaken. Give me that true Conſtancy, by which I may go on ſteadily amidſt all the Aſſaults of the Devil, the World, and my own Corruption; all united in one Intereſt againſt me. Give me that true Perſeverance, that I may purſue my Cauſe, whatever I am to ſuffer in it: That altho' I am to ſeparate from what moſt pleaſes me, quit the beſt Conveniencies of Life, loſe Intereſt and Friends, retire from all that is delightful to me: Altho' I am to ſuffer the ſevereſt Contradictions of Nature, and by Violence break ill Cuſtoms; yet, O God, may I ſtill hold on true to my Undertaking, and think all to be Gain, ſo I can but recover from that Unhappineſs which has been the Effect of my Sins!

Hence I make it my humble Petition to Thee, to enlighten my Underſtanding, that I may not only have a true Senſe of my Sins, but likewiſe ſee all that is neceſſary to be done for my Amendment. And here, I beſeech Thee, let neither Cuſtom, nor the Authority of others, nor the Love of the World, or myſelf, or any other Paſſion, deceive me, either by concealing my Duty, or by finding Reaſons for diſpenſing with me in it. But mercifully lay my whole Duty before me, and

give me a full View of all the Obligations which are to be ſatisfied, as the neceſſary Conditions of a ſincere Repentance. Then add but to this Knowledge, ſuch Grace as may be effectual for doing what I know: And then, O God, how happy ſhall I be in ariſing from all the Slavery of Sin, and regaining that true Liberty which belongs to the Children of God!

O God, who didſt promiſe to thy People, that if they would return to their Duty, obſerve thy Laws, and keep thy Precepts, Thou wouldeſt be their God, and forgive them all their Iniquities: Mercifully direct me in this Way of ſeeking Thee, and grant, that, never admitting any falſe Hopes of Pardon, I may be always ſolicitous to be faithful in thy Law, and upon this Condition expect Forgiveneſs.

O God, who didſt require of thy People to take away their Idols and ſtrange Gods, and to ſerve Thee alone, with all their Hearts, that ſo they might partake of thy Mercy and Protection: Lead me on, I beſeech Thee, in this Way of finding Mercy, and let me be always convinced, that, all Hopes of Forgiveneſs are deceitful, as long as I have any Idol which is not removed. Teach me, O God, to deſtroy all Idols, that I may ſeek, ſerve, and love Thee with all my Heart.

O God, who didſt call upon thy People to turn to Thee with all their Hearts, in faſting, in weeping, and mourning, to rend their Hearts and not their Garments, to depart

depart from all their Wickedneſs, and repent of their Sins: Mercifully grant I may hear thy Voice, and no other Ways expect the Pardon of my Sins, but by doing as Thou haſt preſcribed. Mercy and Forgiveneſs are wholly in thy Hands, how wretchedly then muſt I be deceived, if I think to find them without obſerving the Conditions which Thou haſt ordained! Deliver me, O God, from this Deluſion, and may I always ſeek Thee, as Thou haſt promiſed to be found!

O God, who in *Cain* haſt ſhewed us an Example of Deſpair, grant, that his Misfortune may be my Inſtruction, and that I may be ever afraid of what was his Ruin. I confeſs my many Fears and Dejections, upon the Sight of my great Unworthineſs; but, O God, preſerve me under this Weakneſs, and let the Senſe of thy infinite Mercy ſupport me, both living and dying, againſt all Deſpair. Let me diſtruſt myſelf, who am ſo poor and miſerable; but, O God, let me never have a Diſtruſt of Thee, whoſe Mercies are above all thy Works.

O God, who, in *Pharaoh*, haſt ſhewed us an Example of a falſe Repentance, to the great Provocation of thy Judgments; mercifully preſerve me from all ſuch Deceit. It is a Terror to me to think, how often I have pretended to repent, and yet have ſoon again, like *Pharaoh*, returned to my Sins: And how unhappy may be the State of my Soul, upon this Account, is only known to

Thee, O God. But mercifully forgive me all my paſt Weakneſs, I beſeech Thee, for the Sake of thy only Son; and, for the future, ſo ſtrengthen me by thy Grace, that I may no more deceive myſelf with a counterfeit Repentance; but ſo truly repent, as to forſake all my evil Ways, and be faithful in obſerving the Covenant which I make with Thee.

O God, who, in thy Servant *David*, haſt ſhewed us, how great is thy Mercy, and how powerful is with Thee, the Repentance of an humble Heart; vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, to give me a true Senſe of my Iniquities, and that, as often as I confeſs them before Thee, it may be with ſuch a ſincere Repentance, as was that of *David*, who no ſooner confeſſed his Crime, but he had the Aſſurance of its being forgiven. Oh, that my Heart, O God, were thus truly converted to Thee, when with my Lips I confeſs my Sin!

O God, who, in *Manaſſes*, and the *Ninivites*, haſt given us Demonſtration, how much Sinners, doing Penance for their Iniquities, prevail with Thee, to the diſarming thy Anger, and changing it into Mercy: Shew this Mercy to thy Servant, that, in the Method of thoſe repenting Sinners, I may always ſeek Forgiveneſs. Suffer me not to truſt in deceitful Proteſtations; but, I beſeech Thee, to give me ſuch an Abhorrence of Sin, that I may purſue it, as the *Ninivites* did, and, in the Severity of the Puniſhment, both give Proof of my Averſion to it, and

make

make Nature afraid of returning again to that, which coſts it ſo dear.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who cam'ſt to call Sinners to Repentance, obtain this Grace for me, that I may always repent of my Sins in ſuch a Manner, that I may be of the Number of thoſe who find Mercy with Thee.

O *Jeſus*, by the Effect of whoſe Mercy *Mary Magdalen* ſo truly repented of her Crimes, that of a great Sinner ſhe became the Favourite of Heaven, mercifully grant, that, by a like Converſion, I may renounce all my Sins, and find Thee my Advocate againſt all Accuſers.

O *Jeſus*, by whoſe gracious Look *Peter* called his Sin to Remembrance, and by whoſe Mercy he repented of it with Tears; ſhew the like Mercy to me, tho' unworthy of all Favours: Open my Eyes, that I may have a true Senſe of my Iniquities, and let the Horror of my Sins oblige me to lament them daily in thy Sight. O God, what other Misfortune have I to bewail like that, of having forgotten Thee, my Lord, and lived ſo long an Enemy to Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who, in the Prodigal Son, in the loſt Sheep, in *Zacheus*, in the Poor Publican, in the Thief on the Croſs, haſt convinced us of the Mercy that waits for ſuch as repent: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, as by my Iniquities I have taken Part with theſe Sinners, in forſaking Thee; ſo my Repentance may be ſuch, that with them I may find Mercy, and be again united to Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who by thy holy Baptiſt didſt ſummon all Sinners to repent of their Iniquities, to lay the Ax to the Root, and bring forth Fruit becoming Repentance; mercifully grant to me, an unhappy Sinner, that I may obey this Summons.

Grant I may no longer delay my Repentance, ſince the Loſs of one Moment may be the Hazard of all. I know the Mercy of God is infinite in itſelf; but in Regard of Sinners it has its Bounds, and they cannot always abuſe it: It can be only in this Life; and this Life is in thy Hands, O God! And it may be, thy Arm is already lifted up, in order to cut down this unprofitable Tree. Suffer me therefore no more to delay what is my Duty at preſent, upon the Uncertainty of what is to come; ſince that Time may never come to me; and if it does, I may be then, thro' thy juſt Judgment, ſtill more inclined to Delay.

Grant likewiſe, that in my Repentance I may be ſolicitous to bring forth Fruit worthy of it. Now for this, I am ſenſible, that my penitential Fruit ought to have ſome Proportion to the Grievouſneſs and Number of my Sins; to the Strength of thoſe ill Habits, which Cuſtom has confirmed in me; to the Anger and Judgment of God, which are due to my Sins; and to that particular Grace, by which I am drawn out of Sin, whilſt ſo many others unhappily periſh in it. To all theſe the Fruit of my Repentance ought to have Regard, to be ſuch as

Thou

Thou requireſt. Help me, therefore, O *Jeſus*, and permit me not careleſly to paſs over this Buſineſs of Eternity, which cannot be well done, but with the greateſt Care. Grant I may be truly ſerious in it, and that in the Fruit of my Repentance I may ſhew how great an Abhorrence I have of Sin, how fearful I am of falling into it again, and of the terrible Judgments, the Puniſhment of that unhappy State.

O *Jeſus*, who, in the People enquiring of thy holy Baptiſt what they were to do for the Amendment of their Lives, haſt ſhewed us the Method of true Repentance; graciouſly vouchſafe me thy holy Grace, that I may follow this Method; that I may not only in general reſolve to amend; but that I may both inquire, and conſider in particular what I am to do for accompliſhing what I propoſe; I confeſs, O God, I know the Vanity of general Purpoſes, and that they are ſubject to great Deceit. Teach me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, a better Way, and, with theſe firſt Penitents, let me always conſider the Work I have to do, and how I am to do it. For ſince nothing is to be effected, but by uſing proper Means, if I omit this Conſideration, I may eaſily gueſs all my Pretence to Repentance to be nothing but counterfeit.

O *Jeſus*, by whoſe particular Grace *Zacheus* offered the half of his Goods to the Poor, and to make Satisfaction fourfold, if he had been unjuſt to any, and by this Means, of a publick Sinner became a Child of God:

Mercifully grant, that at all Times I may give Proof of my Converſion by a Change of my Life, and that, like *Zacheus*, my Repentance may be always accompanied with a Solicitude of being juſt both to God and Man. Give me Grace to make Satisfaction to every Neighbour, for all the Injuries I have done them, whether in Goods or good Name; and ſo that I may rather exceed, than come ſhort of what is due. For, in caſe of ſuch Wrong, I am very ſenſible, Repentance cannot be ſincere, if it be not ſolicitous thus to make Reſtitution. Give me Grace likewiſe to conſider my Injuſtice againſt God, and to give Proof of my acknowledged Guilt, by obliging the Offender to make ſuch kind of Satisfaction as I am able, by giving Alms to the Poor, in ſuch a Manner, as may bear ſome Proportion to the Weight of my Sins, and to the Subſtance of what, thro' thy Mercy, I poſſeſs. If I comply with theſe two Conditions, I hope it will be the Effect of a ſincere Converſion, and that, with *Zacheus*, I ſhall receive Thee, O *Jeſus*, into my Houſe.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, to whom all my Weakneſs is known, graciouſly vouchſafe to hear the Petition I now make to Thee; pardon me, I beſeech Thee, for as many Times as, in my Life paſt, I have abuſed thy Mercy, in pretending to repent, without complying with the Conditions of a true Repentance. Great has been my Neglect in this Point, and I cannot but

but be very apprehenſive of thy Diſpleaſure, which I thus provoked againſt me. But, O *Jeſus*, great is thy Mercy to poor Sinners, who, confeſſing their Iniquities, take Shelter in Thee. Have Regard, therefore, to me, for the Forgiveneſs of all the ſeveral Neglects, though unknown to me, by which I have unworthily abuſed thy Goodneſs. And now obtain for me that Grace, that, for the Time to come, as often as I ſhall ſeek to Thee for Mercy, I may do it ſo truly from the Heart, with that ſincere Repentance, with ſuch Endeavours for overcoming all the Evils of my Soul, and with ſuch a penitential Spirit, that I may turn away thy Anger from me, and obtain the Mercy I ſeek.

CONSTANCY.

AT this Time, O God, I come into thy Preſence, to lay before Thee, with Sorrow, a great Weakneſs to which I am unhappily ſubject, and to make my Addreſs to thy infinite Goodneſs, to have Compaſſion on me, though unworthy, and to help me.

I confeſs, O God, through the Effect of thy Grace, I have a Senſe of my Duty of loving

Thee, of ſerving Thee, and of keeping thy Commandments. I ſee likewiſe, how much I not only come ſhort of, but even offend againſt this my manifold Duty: And I know, how very provoking this is to Thee, and how injurious to my eternal Intereſt. Upon which Conſiderations, being touched in Conſcience, I many Times propoſe to reform, and begin a new Life; I ſee the Neceſſity of it, and therefore undertake it with great Deſigns and Reſolutions, ſo as ſometimes to conclude, that nothing in this World ſhall perſuade me to forſake the Way in which I have reſolved to walk.

But ſuch, O God, is my Weakneſs, I ſoon fall from my good Purpoſes; Sloth or Corruption prevail upon me; and, without Reflection, I find myſelf in the midſt of my uſual Infirmities. Thus, O God, it is too often with me; ſo that whatever I propoſe, it ſoon vaniſhes like Smoke, and comes to nothing; and all the Effect of it is to leave me in Confuſion, and give me a ſtill clearer Conviction, of how poor, helpleſs, and wretched a Creature I am.

This, O God, is my Weakneſs, and I muſt own it a great Unhappineſs, in putting a Stop to all that is for my ſpiritual Good, and ſtill keeping me at a Diſtance from Thee. This is the Occaſion that my Prayers are ſo often neglected, interrupted, and diſturbed; that my Paſſions are ungoverned; that the Love of the World prevails in me; that Pride is ſo commanding; that my Tongue takes

takes ſo much ſinful Liberty; and that I go on in many Cuſtoms and Practices, which, I plainly ſee, if not reformed, muſt hazard my Eternity: For altho' I lie under the Conviction of theſe and many others my Infirmities, I am very apprehenſive of their dreadful Conſequences, and hence reſolve upon a Change; yet all this comes to nothing, becauſe of my great Inconſtancy in not purſuing my good Purpoſes; but ſtill letting Corruption creep upon me, to the great Diſappointment of whatever I have propoſed of Good.

Wherefore now, I beſeech Thee, O God, to remedy this my Weakneſs. Shew thy Mercy to me, and deliver me from this great Inconſtancy of Mind, whereby all my beſt Undertakings are rendered fruitleſs. Grant me a true Steadineſs of Spirit, whereby I may be true to what I propoſe of Good, and faithful in whatever Covenant I make with Thee. Suffer me no more to forget, or neglect what I undertake, in Obedience to thy Law; nor ſo eaſily (to my Shame) to be carried out of the Way of Heaven, by every inviting Folly that occurs; nor to flatter my natural Corruption, which I know is my Enemy, and leads me to Sin. Eſtabliſh my Heart, I beſeech Thee, againſt all its uſual Weakneſs, and ſo powerfully confirm me by thy Grace, that, like a faithful Servant, I may chearfully undertake, and with Reſolution perform whatever

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is my Duty, to the Glory of thy holy Name, and my own everlaſting Good.

In the firſt Place, I implore thy Help, O merciful God, againſt all Relapſes into any wilful and known Sin. I know my Danger, and that I have no Security amidſt the many Temptations of Life, except my Heart be confirmed by thy Grace, and by this divine Strength be enabled to make an obſtinate Reſiſtance againſt it. Of myſelf, O God, Thou knoweſt I can do nothing; wherefore, I beſeech Thee, to have Regard to my Infirmity, and permit me no more, as formerly, to forſake my Cauſe, and treacherouſly to take Part with my Enemy. O God, how often have I done this, to my Confuſion! But I moſt humbly implore thy Mercy, that it be ſo no more. Put a Stop to this my Miſery; and infuſe now into my Soul that true Spirit of the Goſpel, that I may, from my Heart, hate all that is ſinful, fly from it, as from my greateſt Enemy, and rather chuſe Death, than knowingly to offend Thee.

Give me Leave, O God, here to lay before Thee thy own Mercies. How many poor weak Creatures, made of the ſame infirm Clay as myſelf, haſt Thou, by thy Grace, ſo raiſed above their Nature, that they have chearfully deſpiſed both the Flatteries and Threats of the World, and embraced all the Torments of Death, rather than do what was diſpleaſing to Thee? Nay, how many, once great Sinners, haſt Thou

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ſo eſtabliſhed in Grace, that they have renounced all their former Iniquities, and ſpent the reſt of their Days in a moſt remarkable Sanctity? Theſe have been ſome of thy Mercies, O God. And why then do I ſtand ſtill ſo long, often purpoſing, and yet advancing nothing; as if my Work were more than could be done?

Lord, Thou haſt ſhewed it may be done; and, in ſo many Inſtances, haſt manifeſted what thy Power and Goodneſs is, in helping weak Creatures to overcome Nature and ſtand againſt Sin. Help me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, and now ſuffer me no longer to waſte my Life, in fruitleſs Purpoſes and barren Thoughts; but give me Grace to follow the Steps of theſe thy choſen Servants, who have generouſly purſued the Courſe of thy Commandments, and would not let the Devil, the World, or their own Corruption, put them out of their Way. Let this Power of thy Grace be ſeen in me alſo, O Lord. It was thy Grace which wrought ſuch a Change in them: And, haſt not Thou promiſed the ſame to ſuch as earneſtly deſire it, and, with Humility, ſeek it?

O God, behold I confeſs my Unhappineſs before Thee; I am truly concerned at my own irreſolute and changeable Temper; I am aſhamed of my Mock-Repentance, in ſo frequently undertaking to amend, and yet ſtill being the ſame; and I here manifeſt to Thee, my God, my moſt earneſt Deſires of being freed from this Inconſtancy; wiſhing with all

all my Heart, that my Soul were confirmed by thy Grace, ſo as never more to experience its uſual Infirmity, but abide ſteady in its Duty, and faithful in its Service to Thee. To Thee, O God, I appeal for the Sincerity of what I here profeſs, aud therefore moſt humbly beſeech Thee to grant my Petion, that I may no longer go round in that unhappy Circle of *Sin and Repent*, *Repent and Sin*; but that I may forſake all my wonted Sins with ſuch a ſolemn Renunciation, as may ſtand good for Eternity. There is enough of my paſt Follies; let it now be the Effect of thy Grace, O God, in me, that there be no more.

Another Petition I make to Thee, O God, for the Remedy of ſome other Weakneſſes, of which I often propoſe the Cure, but never mend. I find myſelf ſubject to ſeveral Paſſions, which, tho' not criminal, are yet the Occaſion of my frequent offending, and departing from the Rule of the Goſpel. 'Theſe are known to Thee, O God, and I cannot pretend to be ignorant of them, becauſe I ſo often ſee myſelf drawn out of the Way by them. The Principal of theſe give me Occaſion of frequent Trouble, becauſe I ſee myſelf ſo weak; and tho' I often reſolve to maſter them, upon the next Occaſion, I am ſtill ſurpriſed into them again. And ſo my whole Life runs away in reſolving, without doing.

Thus, I confeſs, it is with me, and thus it will go on to the End of my Life, if Thou

Thou, O God, doſt not mercifully come in to my Aſſiſtance, and ſtrengthen this wretched Clay. For what can I do, who, tho' ſo often proud of myſelf, am no better than Miſery and Nothing? What can I do, if Thou doſt not help me? Hear then my Prayer, O gracious God, and with thy Grace come to the Relief of this poor helpleſs Sinner. Suffer me no longer thus unworthy to yield to my own corrupt Paſſions, when, knowing them to be diſpleaſing to Thee, I have ſo often bewailed them, as my Unhappineſs, and, in ſolemn Covenants with Thee, engaged to ſtand againſt them. Help me now to overcome them; ſtretch forth thy Arm, and fight for me; give me new Strength, and let my Enemies be put to Flight; and may I never more become a Prey to them, nor be unadviſedly drawn into their Snares.

This ſame I aſk of Thee, O God, as to all my other Failings of Sloth, Love of Eaſe, and of infinite Neglects, to which I am daily ſubject; and likewiſe, as to many Dangers, to which I indiſcreetly expoſe myſelf, and ill Cuſtoms, in which, to the Reproach of my own Conſcience, I ſtill go on. In all theſe I ſtand in need of thy Mercy, O God; becauſe tho' I am conſcious of the great Diſorder theſe cauſe in my Soul, and of many Sins, into which I am led by them; yet nothing of this prevails with me ſo far, as to diſengage my ſelf from them; ſo that while I daily complain of my Misfortunes, and ſeem to lament my Weakneſs, I am ſtill the

the ſame, and my Endeavours are ſo weak, as to effect nothing. Wherefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, have Compaſſion on this thy poor Servant, and permit me not any longer to go on thus doing and undoing, as if I were in jeſt with Eternity, and with thoſe great Duties which I owe Thee. To what Purpoſe can it be, to confeſs my Sins before Thee, to ſigh and expreſs the Senſe of my Unhappineſs in Tears, if I ſtill return to my Weakneſſes again, as if they had never been any Trouble to me? Help me therefore, O merciful God, and deliver me from this Abuſe. Let thy Grace confirm me with greater Conſtancy, that I may no more go on thus changeable and uncertain; but that, being ſtrengthened and made ſteady from above, I may with ſuch Reſolution make Reſiſtance againſt all that is evil, as never to deſiſt, till my Enemies are overcome.

Thus, O God, I ſend forth my Deſires, and aſk Help of Thee, in a Caſe that truly wants it. But how can I reaſonably expect thy Help, if I, thro' a certain Lazineſs of Mind and Want of Reſolution, lie ſtill, and will not take the Pains neceſſary for effecting what I deſire? When I look upon myſelf, and conſider my own Ways, I find, that, after my beſt Purpoſes, I preſently forget what I propoſe, and cannot diſcover, that I am either ſolicitous, or diligent, or watchful, as the Circumſtances of the Thing require; but preſently go on bold and careleſs, as if I were

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ſubject to no Weakneſs, or had no Danger to fear. Now I eaſily ſee, that to grieve at repeated Failings, to reſolve upon Amendment, pray for Help to amend; and after all, to take no more Care and Pains, in order to amend, looks no better than Diſſembling and Shuffling; it looks, as if I did not believe the Buſineſs to be very great, and is an evident Proof, that either my Faith or Eternity is not ſound, or that I act very much againſt Reaſon and Faith, in being ſo very careleſs in an Affair, in which I believe myſelf ſo very much concerned.

It ſhews to me again, that I do not fear Thee, my God, as I ought, and that I do not truly love Thee, it being certain, that if I had either a real Love to do thy holy Will, or a Fear to offend Thee, ſo as the Almighty ought to be feared, I ſhould be more ſolicitous and watchful in overcoming and avoiding all that, which could probably bring me into thy Diſpleaſure; I ſhould make this the great Buſineſs of my Life, and ſhould not value how other Things ſucceeded, ſo this one went well. I eaſily obſerve, how the Love and Fear of created Things work in me; with what Solicitude, Watchfulneſs, and Induſtry they are attended: And is it not too evident, even to my Confuſion, that I do not love Thee, or fear Thee, who am ſo little concerned, and take ſo very little Pains, either in doing what pleaſes Thee, or in avoiding what I know is diſpleaſing to Thee? And how then can I reaſonably expect thy Aſ-

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ſiſtance, O God, who lie daily under the Fruit of ſo many great Neglects, and am ſo conſiderably wanting in what I ought to do?

But the more I ſee my own Wants and Neglects, the greater Neceſſity I have of imploring the Aſſiſtance of thy divine Grace.

Help me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, according to my Neceſſities. Thou knoweſt the Root of all my Neglects, and likewiſe the Remedy proper for my Cure: Be therefore a Phyſician to me, and heal me. I have Reaſon to fear, that my Faith is but imperfect and weak: Encreaſe in me, I beſeech Thee, the Life of Faith; make this vigorous and active, that, the Impreſſions of it being ſtrong, I may be carried on powerfully by them, and purſue all the Works of Eternity with Earneſtneſs and Perſeverance, anſwerable to the Importance of the Concern. Raiſe my Faith to ſuch a Degree, that leſſening the Care of this World, and of all that belongs to it, the great Solicitude of my Soul may be confined to the Buſineſs of Salvation, and my principal Watchfulneſs be employed in ſeeing, that this be done well.

O God, if my Faith were what it ought to be, how careful ſhould I be in all the Affairs of my Soul! How would theſe take up my Thought and Memory, and put me upon all manner of Contrivance and Labour for effecting whatever appears neceſſary for my eternal Good! How would the Follies of this World be paſſed by with Contempt; the Concern of earthly Buſineſs be leſſened; the Inclinations

Inclinations of corrupt Nature be diſpiſed or trampled under Foot; and the Exerciſes of Prayer, and of all manner of Self-denial, be embraced with Chearfulneſs, as the proper Means for coming to the Poſſeſſion of Thee, the only deſirable Good! Is it not plain then, while my Soul is ſo very much indiſpoſed, and I am ſubject to ſo many continual Neglects in all that is ſpiritual, that I want Faith, and that the Want of this is the Root of all my Unſettledneſs, of my little Reſolution and Inconſtancy? Help me, therefore, O God, and encreaſe my Faith.

Let my Soul likewiſe be poſſeſſed with the true Love of Thee, and with a Fear of thy Diſpleaſure; for I evidently ſee, that the Want of theſe is one great Occaſion of all my Neglects; and I in vain complain of being falſe to my good Purpoſes, if this Foundation of all Chriſtian Reſolution and Courage be not laid in my Heart: There being no Poſſibility of labouring and perſevering in thy Service, for thoſe, who do not in earneſt fear Thee, and ſincerely love Thee. Shew this Mercy therefore to thy Servant, as to poſſeſs my Heart with this Fear and this Love; that hence my Soul may be changed; having a Horror of all that Sloth or Self-love ſuggeſts, as being unworthy of one, that has undertaken to ſerve God; and with an untired Eagerneſs purſuing all that belongs to Salvation, as being the Work of God, and the only Means of coming to be united with him for all Eternity.

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This Petition I make to Thee, O God, as to all that can be neceſſary for overcoming Sin, and all the Dangers of it: But as to ſuch Weakneſs or Failings, which are almoſt inſeparable from this our State of Infirmity, I beg likewiſe, that I may have a Diſlike of them, that I may not favour or yeild to them; that, being grieved to ſee myſelf ſo imperfect, I may, both in Sighs, Prayers, and conſtant Endeavours, daily ſtrive againſt them; but, O God, as far as any of theſe may be neceſſary for my Humiliation and Exerciſe; as far as theſe are the inſeparable Attendants of our corrupt Nature, and the Puniſhment of Sin, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee to grant me Patience under them, that I may ſubmit to the Trouble of them, as to an Uneaſineſs, which is the Condition of this State, and a Penalty, which thy Juſtice has laid upon me; ſo that I may be always patient under their Contradiction, while with my beſt Endeavours I am ſolicitous to have no other Part, but only to fight againſt them. Grant me this Patience, O God, that I may not indiſcreetly diſquiet myſelf with what is unavoidable, and, by ſuch Diſquiets, be the great Hindrance of my own ſpiritual Good. Teach me rather to be wiſe, that I may ſubmit to what cannot be avoided, and learn the Chriſtian Art of drawing Good out of Evil, and of improving under the Exerciſe.

O God, who in *Pharaoh* haſt ſhewed us the ſad Effects of Inconſtancy, and the Puniſhments of it; mercifully grant, that I may be

be faithful in the Performance of whatever Covenants I make with Thee; and that, being always ſolicitous in this Affair, I may neither forget, nor neglect what I undertake; but, by a due Watchfulneſs over all my Ways, may prevent the Return of thoſe Evils, which I have engaged to amend.

O God, who in *Saul* haſt ſhewed us what human Weakneſs is, who ſeveral Times promiſing no more to purſue innocent *David*, yet ſtill purſued him again: Shew this Mercy to me, thy unworthy Servant, that I may not fall under this Weakneſs; that I may not be thus changeable and inconſtant; that I may not return to what I have promiſed to forſake; but that, with Chriſtian Fidelity and Reſolution, I may be true to whatever I undertake in Obedience to thy holy Will.

O God, who didſt ſo often forgive thy People of *Iſrael*, ſeeking to Thee for the Pardon of their Sins, and, for their repeated Tranſgreſſions, didſt at length forſake them: I beſeech Thee, thro' thy infinite Mercies, to deliver me from this Perverſeneſs; that I may be ever watchful againſt all thoſe Sins, which thro' thy Goodneſs have been once forgiven me. May the Dread of thy Judgments here awaken my Care, ſince I ſee there is no greater Provocation, than to be thus ungrateful under thy Mercies, and to abuſe thy Goodneſs!

O God, who haſt declared by thy Prophet, that, if the juſt Man ſhall turn from his Righteouſneſs, all the Good he has done ſhall not be remembered, and that he ſhall die in his Sin:

Sin: Seaſon my Heart, I beſeech Thee, with a wholſome Fear of thy Juſtice, that I may be careful againſt all Relapſes into Sin; for if the juſt Man departing from Thee ſhall feel the Severity of thy Anger, what muſt my Unhappineſs be, an unworthy Sinner as I am, if, having recovered thy Grace, I become forgetful of thy Mercy, and return again to my Iniquities? Let thy Goodneſs, O God, prevent this Miſery.

O God, who, in thy Servant *David*, haſt given us an Example of Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Purpoſes of a true Repentance, ſo as to bewail his Sin, and water his Couch with Tears, to humble himſelf in Faſting and Sack-cloth, to pour forth his Soul ſeven times a Day in Prayer, and to meditate on thy Law, Day and Night: Grant, O God, that having obtained thy Mercy, in the Forgiveneſs of my Sins, I may be watchful againſt all my wonted Weakneſs, and, by the Method of this thy Servant, labour to prevent the Dangers of it. Oh, that my Heart were poſſeſſed with a ſincere Repentance! How then ſhould I have a Horror of Sin, and be ready to embrace all thoſe difficult Ways which have been a Help to thy Servants, for being faithful to the Obligations of a true Repentance!

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who, in the evil Spirit returning into the Man (from whence he had been caſt out) with ſeven other evil Spirits worſe than himſelf, haſt ſhewed, that it is no Advantage for a Sinner to partake of the Mercies

Mercies of God, in the Forgiveneſs of his Sin, except by juſt Diligence he labours to prevent the Return of his Iniquity; and that if, failing in this, he again opens his Heart to Sin, the latter End of this Man will be worſe than the Beginning: Obtain for me, I beſeech Thee, the Grace of Perſeverance, that, being called to Repentance, I may make a good Uſe of that Mercy; and, being always apprehenſive of thy Judgments, may, by an untired Watchfulneſs, cut off all Hopes from the evil Spirit, once caſt out, of ever returning again. Help me, O *Jeſus*, in this Point, for great is my Infirmity; and this Encreaſe of Unhappineſs muſt be my Fate, if thy Grace does not finiſh what thy Grace has begun.

O *Jeſus*, who, having healed the Man of a long Infirmity of eight and thirty Years, didſt give him this Charge: *Behold, thou art made whole; Sin no more, leſt a worſe Thing come to Thee:* Grant this Mercy to thy Servant, that I may have a juſt Apprehenſion of relapſing into Sin, and of the ſeverer Judgments which are the Puniſhment of it. It is Thou, O God, who knoweſt the ill Conſequences of this Neglect, haſt charged me to have a Care: Grant, that the Mercy of this Admonition may ever keep me watchful againſt all the Dangers of Sin, and that I may never be ſo fooliſhly deſperate as to venture there, where Thou haſt forwarned me of ſuch Judgments.

O *Jeſus*, who by thy Apoſtle haſt repeated to us this Leſſon, That *it is better for Chriſtians,*

Chriſtians, not to have known the Way of Juſtice. than, after the Knowledge, to turn back from the holy Commandment delivered to them: Vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, to imprint this Leſſon in my Mind, that I may be ſolicitous, not only to recover from the State of Sin, but likewiſe to retain whatever Grace Thou ſhalt beſtow upon me. Stand by me therefore, and communicate to me ſuch Reſolution and Strength of Mind, as are abſolutely neceſſary for ſo weak a Creature as I am, every Day expoſed to Temptations, and encompaſſed with Dangers on every Side. Deliver me from Sloth and Careleſneſs, make me ever fearful of Dangers, and diſtruſtful of myſelf; keep my Mind watchful againſt all Infirmities, but eſpecially thoſe which have brought me into thy Diſpleaſure. Let this, O *Jeſus*, be the Method of my Life, and then, I hope, by thy Grace, never to turn back from the Way of Juſtice in which thy Mercy ſhall place me.

O *Jeſus*, who by thy Apoſtle haſt informed us, how much thy Servants have ſuffered, rather than be wanting in their Fidelity to Thee; that many have had the Trial of cruel Mockings, of Scourgings, of Impriſonment and Bonds: That many have been ſtoned, ſawn aſunder, or ſlain with the Sword; that many have wandered about in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins, in Deſerts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, being deſtitute, affiicted, and tormented; and all this, that they might be faithful in their Duty,

Duty, and not be falſe to the Covenant they had made with Thee: I beſeech Thee, O bleſſed Redeemer, that, being engaged in the ſame Service with Theſe, I may partake of the ſame Grace; that I may not ſo eaſily forget my Duty, or be perſuaded to act againſt it; but, being reſolute and conſtant to what I profeſs, may rather chooſe to ſuffer all Difficulties, than be faithleſs to Thee. Oh! How will the Conſtancy of theſe thy Servants, under all Extremities, be my Condemnation, who am tired and diſcouraged in ordinary Conflicts, and often forſake thy Cauſe, when I have nothing to ſuffer for it? Ah, treacherous Sinner; how wilt thou anſwer it, who art ſo little ſolicitous for being faithful, where it is thy Duty, as others have done, to lay down thy Life? How little haſt thou done in this Affair? Nay, how little concerned art thou, to do any Thing? O Jeſus, give me a better Spirit, that I may take Pains to be faithful, and, like my holy Predeceſſors, eſteem my Duty of greater Concern than my Life.

O *Jeſus*, who, by the ſame Apoſtle, haſt again confirmed this Leſſon, in requiring us, *Not to be wearied and faint in our Minds*; foraſmuch *as we have not yet reſiſted unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin*; and in theſe Words haſt told us, That it is our Duty to ſtrive againſt Sin, even unto Blood: Grant, I may have always in mind a lively Senſe of this Obligation, that I may never be wearied in a Cauſe, which cannot coſt too dear.

How miſerable am I at preſent, who, inſtead of ſtriving againſt Sin, too often go forth to meet it, and open my Heart to receive it! How miſerable, who cannot perſuade myſelf there to take Pains, where I ought to labour and fight, even unto Blood! O *Jeſus*, change my Heart, that I may be true to my Profeſſion; that, knowing it my Duty to reſiſt Sin, I may with Perſeverance reſiſt it, and be reſolute in venturing All for eſtabliſhing thy Kingdom in my Soul.



Temptations.

I Confeſs, O God, my Weakneſs to be very great; and Thou knoweſt how many, how violent, how endleſs are the Temptations of this Life; and that it is impoſſible for ſuch Weakneſs as mine to ſubſiſt amidſt ſuch Dangers, if it be not ſupported by thy heavenly Grace. Behold, therefore, convinced of my Neceſſity, I come at this Time before Thee, to implore thy fatherly Aſſiſtance upon this infirm Creature, who muſt certainly periſh, if Thou haſt not Compaſſion on me. Look, therefore, I beſeech Thee, upon me thy poor Servant, and ſtrengthen me by thy divine Grace, that I may not be left to myſelf, amidſt the great Difficulties of my Life, but, under all Trials, may be faithful to Thee, my God, and

and not do any thing that is displeasing to Thee.

Stretch forth thy Hand and help me; for what can I do, who am so poor and helpless, if thy heavenly Light does not discover to me the Dangers of this unhappy Life, and thy Grace enable me to overcome them? I know I deserve not what I ask, who have so often sinned against Thee: But, O God, it being the Horror of my Sins that now terrifies me, and the long Experience of my repeated Weakness that now fills me with Fears; I hope Thou wilt have Compassion on me, who, having often offended Thee, am now displeased at my past Offences, and most earnestly desire to sin no more.

For this End I now beg thy Assistance; and, in the first Place, I beseech Thee to give me a true Knowledge of myself, that I may be sensible of all the Infirmities and Passions to which I am subject, and which often lead me into Sin. Suffer me no more to dissemble or flatter them, as if they were innocent; nor to pass them by without Concern, as if there were no Danger in them. No, my God, this I know to be a great Unhappiness, and even one of the heaviest of thy Judgments, to leave Christians under this Blindness, as to live on without knowing their Enemies, and without any Apprenension of the many Snares which are before them.

Give me a Senſe likewiſe of all other Dangers, eſpecially of thoſe infinite Snares, which the World lays before me, in whatever Way it is prepared to deceive; as likewiſe of all ſuch as the Devil's Malice contrives, who, having found my Weakneſs, knows how to lay and work out his Deſigns. Of all theſe, I beſeech Thee, O God, to give me a true Light, that, by diſcerning the Miſchief of whatever is propoſed, I may be better provided againſt it, and ſo govern my Steps, as not to be made a Prey to the Enemy.

For my greater Security, I beg of Thee, O Father of Mercies, the Spirit of Wiſdom; not the Wiſdom of this World, which periſhes, but that better Wiſdom, which leads to Eternity; that, by the Help of this, may be prevented in me all farther Effects of Raſhneſs and Indiſcretion. O God, what Reaſon have I to be confounded at the many Sins into which I have been unhappily ſurprized, for want of due Care and more Conſideration! I heartily deſire they may be no Addition to what, thro' my Misfortune, has already been; and therefore make this earneſt Petition to Thee, that I may be more circumſpect for the Time to come; that I be no more bold in the Dangers of Sin; that I be not over credulous, too light, eaſy, and inconſiderate; but that I may always deliberate, and, by prudent Foreſight, eſcape all thoſe Snares by which either the World or the Devil prepares to draw me into Sin.

But,

But, O God, let it not be thy only Mercy to give me a Foreſight of Dangers, but gran me this one Petition more, that I may have Strength to ſtand againſt them. This muſt b thy Gift, O God, for in myſelf I have no Help. Take me therefore, I beſeech Thee into thy Protection, and let not this poor Creature periſh, who, confeſſing my extreme Poverty, fly to Thee for Shelter againſt the infinite Dangers which threaten me. Shew thyſelf to be my God in eſpouſing my Cauſe, and undertake my Defence: Stand by me, when Danger approaches, and let not the Enemy prevail againſt me.

Thou haſt given me ſufficient Proof of thy Goodneſs and Power; and, when I conſider the wonderful Things Thou haſt wrought in ſuch Veſſels of Weakneſs as I am, I have an Aſſurance of being ſecure, if Thou ſheweſt this Mercy to thy Servant, as to enable me by thy Grace, and appear in my Cauſe. And haſt not Thou promiſed this to ſuch as call upon Thee in the Day of Tribulation, and put their Truſt in Thee? Remember, O God, this thy Promiſe; for behold now a poor Creature is proſtrate before Thee, who moſt ſolemnly owns, that he (ſhe) has no Help but in Thee, and deſpairing of himſelf (herſelf) has no Confidence but in thy Grace.

Have Regard therefore to my univerſal Weakneſs, and, according to my manifold Neceſſities, pour forth thy Grace into my Soul. Confirm my Heart againſt all Invitations to Sin, and when, thro' its natural Corruption, it

is in Danger of being drawn into Evil, then come in to my Aſſiſtance, O God, and mercifully deliver me. Teach me to deſpiſe all that pleaſes for a Moment, and torments for ever. Eſtabliſh me againſt all frothy Charms, and ſuffer me no more to be deluded with what is vain and fooliſh; nor to catch at that which flatters that it may ruin. O God, how do I ſee my Miſery while I aſk for Help! Help me, therefore. I beſeech Thee, in the evil Day, and be my Deliverer when Danger is before me.

I do not, however, aſk the Privilege of being exempt from all Temptations or Trials, for I know that is not to be in this mortal State: I know Thou art pleaſed to exerciſe thy beſt Servants with many Trials, that, being found faithful, it may be to the Encreaſe of their Crown; I know they are neceſſary for to balance our Pride, and that, being thus convinced of our Weakneſs, we may be kept humble, and in a due Dependance on Thee. I aſk therefore nothing in this Point, but leave this whole Matter to the Order of thy Providence. But what I earneſtly beg is, that Thou wilt conſider this great Weakneſs, and aſſiſt me with thy heavenly Grace in Proportion to the Trials Thou ſhalt appoint for me, that I may be faithful under them, and make the Advantage of them which thy Goodneſs has deſigned for me.

But this muſt be the Effect of thy Grace, O God; for Thou ſeeſt what my Infirmity is, who have neither Patience to bear with Difficulties, as I ought, nor Courage to ſtand my Ground in ordinary Aſſaults; ſo that, whatever Trials come to my Share, I muſt certainly be a Loſer by them, if thy Goodneſs does not mercifully ſupport me. Give me, therefore, inward Strength of Mind, according to the Difficulty of the Conflicts into which Thou ſhalt pleaſe to call me; and, by thy heavenly Light, direct me how to make the right Uſe of them.

I know there are none undertake to be thy Servants, but they muſt expect to be tempted, and be prepared for Trials. It is thus Virtue is perfected, and, by many Victories, is made a Way to greater Triumphs. If by this Way Thou haſt carried thy beſt Servants, give me Grace likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, to ſubmit to the Trouble of it, and let me not be tired or impatient under the Exerciſe. It is an uneaſy Thing to be thus always ſubject to Contradictions, to feel the Struggle of a rebellious Nature, and to have the Mind perplexed with what it moſt abhors: But ſuch being the Condition of our unhappy State, I ſubmit to the Trouble of it, as to the juſt Puniſhment of Sin, and only implore thy Aſſiſtance, that I may neither open my Heart to the ſinful Part, nor be dejected at this repeated Experience of my Weakneſs.

I moſt earneſtly again Petition for thy Grace againſt all the Deſigns which the Devil has againſt me. Thou thyſelf haſt told me, that he goes about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour; and I know his Malice is particular againſt thoſe who have by Violence forced themſelves out of his Slavery, and take Pains to be faithful in ſerving Thee. And what can I, a poor weak Creature, do to be ſecure againſt his Aſſaults, who knows all my Infirmities, and has ſo many Ways to deceive! Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to ſtand by me, and, by thy Grace, protect me in Time of Danger. My Help is in Thee, and, if Thou mercifully takeſt me into thy Care, I need not fear what all the infernal Powers can do againſt me; but then, without Thee, O God, Thou ſeeſt I periſh.

Confirm therefore my Heart, and make it ſteady in thy Service, that I may not hearken to the Suggeſtions of the Enemy, nor be moved with his Deluſions. Nature is weak, and inclines to all that is ſinful; but this Weakneſs and Inclination are no Sin, if the Heart keeps the Command of itſelf, and if the Will yeilds not to what is evil. Let my Heart and Will, therefore, be under thy Protection, O God, that, whatever Temptations ariſe, theſe may abide conſtant and faithful to Thee and to thy Commands. Dwell Thou in my Heart, and command my Will, and, under this Diſcipline, teach them to reſiſt or deſpiſe all that is evil. Under this Method I may walk on ſecurely,

ſince

ſince all that the Devil can do is nothing, if the Will ſtand its Ground, and be not falſe to Thee. He can fawn and bark, but can bite none but thoſe that are willing.

Upon this Ground I beſeech Thee, O God, to confirm my Soul againſt all Dejection, Anxiety, and indiſcreet Terrors, ſo that I may even then enjoy a certain Peace of Mind, when the Devil, by his Suggeſtions, is endeavouring to throw me into Diſquiet. I am ſenſible how great an Intereſt he has in perplexing my Mind with Fears; ſince by theſe is put a Stop to all my beſt Deſigns, I become like a heartleſs, diſcouraged Perſon, and am rendered almoſt incapable either of reſiſting Evil, or doing Good. Wherefore I earneſtly deſire thy aſſiſting Grace, that, being ever watchful againſt all evil Thoughts, I may be likewiſe careful to prevent all manner of Diſturbance, and not give the Devil any Advantage by my Indiſcretion. This muſt be thy Gift, O God, ſince my Mind is ſo eaſily perplexed, that, if Thou doſt not command a Calm, I can expect nothing but a Succeſſion of Storms.

But, above all, I moſt earneſtly implore thy Protection, O God, againſt myſelf, becauſe from hence is my greateſt Danger; and neither the World, nor Devil is ſo much the Cauſe of Temptations to me, as I am to myſelf. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, moſt gracious Lord, to have Pity on thy Servant, and to ſecure me ſo by thy Grace, that I may no more be the Author of my own Miſchief. For this End I beſeech Thee, O God, that, by thy Help, my

Heart may be under better Government, ſo as to command all its Affections and Paſſions; that it may no more be fond of what is dangerous or unprofitable, nor admire thoſe Things which are deceitful, and have nothing ſubſtantial in them. Into how many Sins have I run, drawn by my own ungoverned Deſires! But now, by thy Grace, O God, may all theſe be moderated; for then will the Temptations be leſſened which are occaſioned by them.

Command likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, all my ſinful Inclinations, and bring them into Subjection to thy Law. Theſe often give me Diſturbance, and lead many Times with Violence to what is criminal, ſeeking ſuch Things as flatter them, and thus ſurprizing me in Sin. And how many, O God, are thoſe Inclinations, and how deceitful! So that wholly to root them out is impoſſible; and the beſt Endeavours, for ſubduing ſome, are generally attended with the ill Succeſs of making Way for others. This is an Unhappineſs which obliges me to ſeek Help from Thee: For while I have ſo ſtrong a Biaſs to what is Evil, and bend with that Weight to Sin, as if my great Buſineſs were to ſeek my own Deſtruction; how can I be ſecure if Thou, O God, doſt not ſhew Mercy to me? Help me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, and in this, manifeſt thy Goodneſs to me, in giving me Grace to moderate all my Inclinations, and that I may no more follow, or even hearken to thoſe which lead to Sin.

Such

Such another Petition I make to Thee, O God, that I may govern all my Senſes. Theſe are a great Mercy, and I know how miſerable I ſhould be, if any one of them were taken from me. Whence I own, I have Reaſon to be thankful for what I enjoy, and to be careful in the right Uſe of them for the Service of my temporal and ſpiritual Life. And yet, how unhappy am I, who, forgetful of this thy Mercy, abuſe thy Bleſſings, and ſo often make my Senſes the Inſtruments of Sin, in the Service of thoſe Inclinations and Deſires, which, by thy Law, I am commanded to reſiſt; and every Day, by the undue Liberty I give them, create to myſelf many Temptations which weaken, if not quite overthrow all that is good within me?

Here then, O God, I moſt humby beſeech Thee to be my Helper, for the better Government of all my Senſes; that I may no more abuſe them to thy Diſpleaſure, and to the Increaſe of ſuch Temptations which are ſo much Poiſon to my Soul. Teach me to govern my Eyes and my Ears, that, being open to all that is profitable, they may be ever ſhut againſt Vanity and Sin. How many times has Death entered in by theſe, and made my Soul a Prey to the Enemy? But it is enough, O God, it is enough; let me thus no more become my own Murtherer. Put a Guard, likewiſe, upon my Lips, that my Tongue be no more employed in preparing Snares for my Soul; that I offend not in Words, nor in gratifying my Appetite to any Exceſs. Let my Hands

and

and Steps be under the ſame Reſtraint, that theſe be no more ſerviceable to Sin, nor, like unnatural Parts, contribute to the eternal Ruin of the Whole. Thus, O God, may all my outward Man be under the Diſcipline of thy Law, that I may with Truth ſay, it is thy holy Will, and not Corruption, that rules in me.

Having thus begun, permit me, O Lord, who am but Duſt and Aſhes, to make my Neceſſities known, and ſtill to aſk for Relief. Thou knoweſt, O God, into how many Temptations I am led by Sloth and Idleneſs. Firſt, being alone, if a ſlothful Humour be but indulged, how fruitful does it preſently ſhew itſelf in infinite Variety of vain and unprofitable Fancies; ſuch as, beginning with what is only impertinent, ſoon lead to what is prophane, monſtrous, and ſinful, ſo as to attempt upon God himſelf and the whole Table of his Commandments? In this, O God, I muſt confeſs my great Folly in raiſing up againſt myſelf ſo many evil Spirits, who of myſelf am able to lay none.

Then, as to idle Converſation, and ſuch Entertainments as are ſought for gratifying an idle Humour; it is not poſſible to number the Snares I prepare for myſelf, and to what Degree I encreaſe the Difficulties of my Salvation. Ah, my God! were it my Buſineſs to join with the Devil, and to contrive with him my more certain Damnation, I need take no other Counſel but of Sloth and Idleneſs, and walk by their Direction; for theſe will do the Work

Work of ſeven Devils. And what a Confuſion then ought it to be, for me, who pretend to be a Servant of God, and to ſave my Soul, to make Choice of ſuch ill Adviſers, and not only to be led by them, but even to be pleaſed, and think myſelf then moſt happy when I am following their Directions!

O God, I have here Reaſon to be confounded at my Madneſs, and call upon Thee for Help. Have Compaſſion therefore on me, as an unhappy Contriver of my own Ruin, and give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, to be wiſer. Make me jealous of all Impertinency of Thought and vain Amuſements; and, ſince this Liberty leads me ſo often to the Brink of Sin, inſpire me with a prudent Fear of it, that I may give a Check to its firſt Roving, and rather chooſe to ſmother Sin in its remoter Diſpoſitions, than help to bring it on ſo far, that I know not how to be diſengaged from it, without evident Danger of becoming its Prey.

Deliver me likewiſe, O God, from that great Unhappineſs of loving to be idle. I have ſeen the ſad Effects of this, and now wiſh, with all my Heart, it may never any more be found in me. Hear therefore my Petition, I beſeech Thee, and take from me the Spirit of Sloth and Idleneſs, that I may be happily reſcued from the infinite Dangers of it. Root out this Evil, and let all the Remnants of it be deſtroyed. Behold, I lay open my Heart before Thee, and, without any Reſerve, put it into thy Hands, moſt earneſtly imploring thy Almighty Power to change and mold it as Thou wilt;

wilt; ſo that Thou purify it from this Corruption, and give it a true Horror of this Seed of Damnation.

But, if Thou art ſo pleaſed, that Inclinations ſhall ſtill remain in me, for my Trial, I ſubmit to the Orders of thy Providence; Thy holy Will be done; but then, O Lord, ſtrengthen me by thy holy Grace, that I may not yield, nor give myſelf up to be directed by them; for, if I take theſe for my Guide, I know I am in Danger of being eternally loſt, and ſhall in vain aſk of Thee, *Not to lead me into Temptation*, while it will be my Choice to ſeek Temptations, and run into the Midſt of them. Since, therefore, Thou haſt been ſo merciful, O God, as to give me a true Senſe of this Unhappineſs, perfect now this Work in me, and, by thy Grace, enable me to overcome it, and let me no more there yield, where yielding is nothing leſs than putting myſelf into the Devil's Hands.

Wherefore, O God, I beſeech Thee to ſeaſon my Heart with a true Fear of this Evil, that, inſtead of thinking favourably, I may always be afraid of it. Give me a Diſlike of all thoſe Places, Entertainments, and Converſations, which Idleneſs ſeek; and, however they may ſeem pleaſing to others, let me have no other Idea of them, but from the infinite Number of Families which are there ruined, and of Souls which are corrupted and periſh there. Thus let me always eſteem them as Porticos to Hell, and the Devil's Butchery; and hence be more fearful of them than of Death;

Death; that ſo I may never hearken to Invitations, nor encourage ſuch Propoſals any more than I would of playing with Poiſon, with Baſiliſks or Dragons, or, which is the Truth, with infernal Spirits, deſigned on purpoſe to make me their Prey.

Thus, O God, I deſire it may be with me: And though my Temper be ſuch, as to be averſe to what I here aſk; yet behold, my God, without regarding Inclination, I, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, both repeat and preſs this my Petition, that I may have no Reliſh but real Horror of whatever is the Entertainment of Idleneſs. And ſince there needs no more for obtaining what I aſk, but thy Will and thy Word; ſpeak, O Lord, the Word, and my Soul ſhall be changed; command, Lord, and I ſhall become a new Creature, not ſeeking or admiring what is ſinful or vain, but ſuch profitable Exerciſes as may be for my eternal Good.

And, if ſo Thou wilt, that I find Nature to be Nature ſtill; ſtill craving for what pleaſes, and averſe to what is truly good; give me Grace to deny it; and if it pines under the Diſcipline; if it complains of Rigour; if it pleads againſt Singularity; if it pretends Health; if the Danger of becoming ſtupid and melancholy be its Argument, let it pine, complain, and plead on; but let me ſtill be more afraid of Idleneſs, than of whatever Inconvenience it pretends, and chuſe rather to bear the Uneaſineſs of Nature, than to endeavour its Relief with the Hazard of Eternity. This is my moſt earneſt

Petition

Petition to Thee, to make me ſincere in it, and that I may find the Effects of thy Mercy, in reſolutely withſtanding the next Occaſions that offer which are in Favour of Idleneſs.

O God, who didſt permit our firſt Parents to be tempted in Paradiſe, and, in their Fall, haſt ſhewed us both our own Weakneſs, and the diſmal Effects of giving Ear to the Devil; mercifully grant this our common Misfortune may be my daily Inſtruction; and that what I every Day ſuffer from that firſt Attempt, which the Devil made, may give ſuch a Dread of all his Propoſals, as to reject them with Speed, and with a conſtant Reſolution to ſtand againſt them.

O God, who, in *Sampſon*, *David*, and *Solomon*, haſt given us ſo many Inſtances of human Weakneſs, and ſhewed us, that neither Strength, Piety, nor Wiſdom are any Security againſt Temptations; grant, I beſeech Thee, that the Senſe of my own Weakneſs may ever make me fearful of Danger, and watchful againſt all Temptations: For, when I ſee Perſons of thy own Choice, and wonderfully privileged with heavenly Favours, thus miſerably to fall; what can I expect, ſo unworthy a Sinner, but to become a Prey to the Enemy, if I expoſe myſelf to Dangers, and to have my Preſumption puniſhed, by being forſaken by Thee!

O God, who didſt permit the Children of *Iſrael* ſo often to ſink under the Trials which Thou didſt ſend them, and ſo often to offend,

by

by yielding under Temptations; have Regard, I beſeech Thee, to thy Servant, and aſſiſt me with heavenly Strength, that I may have Patience and Courage under all the Trials of Life, and ſtand againſt all Temptations, as againſt the Enemies of my Soul, and the Snares of Hell.

O God, by whoſe Grace *Abraham* was faithful to Thee in the greateſt of Trials, and *Moſes* preſerved amidſt infinite Provocations: Help me, I beſeech Thee, with thy Divine Grace; that, whereas, of myſelf, I muſt certainly fall under the Difficulties of Life, I may be ſupported by thy Grace, and with Courage go through whatever Exerciſes Thou ſhalt appoint for my Trial. It is hard what many Times happens; but I know all may be done by thy Aſſiſtance; and that, being nothing of myſelf, by Thee I may be made ſtrong.

O God, who didſt ſupport *Suſanna* and *Judith* amidſt great Temptations, and carry them ſpotleſs out of great Dangers; let the ſame Grace, I beſeech Thee, O God, go along with me, and be the Support of my Weakneſs; that whatever Temptation occur, whether from the Malice of Men or Devils, or from my own Corruption, I may faithfully ſtand againſt them, with the Courage of theſe thy Servants, and never be ſo fooliſhly blind as, by ſuch periſhing Satisfactions, to be flattered out of Eternity.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who, taking upon Thee human Nature, waſt ſubject ſo far to our Weak-

Weakneſs, as to be aſſaulted by the Devil, and even with the moſt horrid of all Temptations; mercifully grant, that, by thy Example, I may be encouraged; and that if Thou ſhalt ſo permit, that the Devil diſturb my Mind with prophane, ſinful, and wicked Thoughts, I may not be dejected at the Attempts of his Malice; but that, if he ſhould ſtill repeat and preſs them, as he did to Thee, I may be ſtill comforted with the Remembrance of what Thou ſufferedſt, and that it ought to be neither a Trouble nor Surprize to find an unworthy Member thus aſſociated to his Divine Head.

O *Jeſus*, who didſt reject all the Temptations of the Devil, and oblige him, in Deſpair, to retire from Thee, vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, ſo powerfully to aſſiſt me with thy Grace, that, by thy Example, I may never open my Heart to the Propoſals of the Enemy; but with ſuch Reſolution ſtand againſt them, as to take from him all Hopes of Succeſs, and force him to leave me in the Enjoyment of that Peace which I deſire always to have in Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt taught us to pray, that we be not led into Temptations; and didſt give this Advice to thy three Apoſtles in the Garden of *Gethſemane*; *Ariſe and pray, leſt you enter into Temptation:* I beſeech Thee, O merciful Redeemer, not to forſake me amidſt the Temptations of this Life, nor leave me to myſelf; but let thy Grace ever accompany me, that I may be watchful againſt all Dangers, and, by diligent Prayer, obtain ſo far the Favour

vour of thy Aſſiſtance, that I may continue faithful to Thee, and ever acknowledge Thee to have been my Deliverer.

O *Jeſus*, who, in thy Apoſtles forſaking Thee, and in *Peter* denying Thee, haſt convinced us of our Weakneſs, and of the little Confidence we ought to have in ourſelves; teach me, I beſeech Thee, this Leſſon, that I may never preſume on my own Strength or Virtue, which is only leaning on a broken Reed; but that my whole Confidence, in Time of Danger, may be in Thee, my God. For, if thoſe thy choſen Servants, bred up under thy Diſcipline, and ſanctifyed by particular Grace, diſcover ſo much Weakneſs, when left to themſelves, what muſt be my unhappy Fate, O God, if I am not mindful of my whole Help being in Thee, but ſhould unfortunately truſt to myſelf? Preſerve me, I beſeech Thee, O *Jeſus*, from this Blindneſs.

O *Jeſus*, who by thy Apoſtle haſt given us this Caution; *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed, leſt he fall:* Vouchſafe to poſſeſs my Heart with this neceſſary Fear of myſelf; and that even then, I may be moſt apprehenſive of my own Weakneſs, when I think myſelf moſt ſecure and ſtrong. I know the Fear and Diſtruſt of one's ſelf is the Foundation of Chriſtian Strength, and that Humility is the beſt Prevention of Sin; according to this Method, may I always proceed, and upon this Foundation may I build my Security, diſtruſting in myſelf,

ſelf, that I may have my whole Confidence in Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who, amidſt the Privileges of wonderful Revelations, didſt exerciſe thy Apoſtle with very ſharp Temptations; and, upon his earneſt Petition, didſt give him this comfortable Aſſurance, that thy Grace was ſufficient for him: Give me Grace to ſubmit, with Patience, to whatever Exerciſe of this Kind, Thou ſhalt appoint for my Humiliation; let me then, O God, ſeek Help from Thee; and let this be my Comfort, that however weak I am, I have, in thy Grace, ſufficient Help for defeating all the Power of the Enemy. Let me never be diſcouraged in being exerciſed with St. *Paul*, as long as I have the ſame God to defend me.

O *Jeſus*, who didſt ſo far ſupport this thy Apoſtle, that, inſtead of being dejected, he gloried in his Infirmities, as being the Occaſion of thy Power being manifeſted in him: Preſerve me, I beſeech Thee, from all Dejection of Spirits amidſt theſe Buffets of Satan, and teach me rather to glory in the Conviction of my Weakneſs, as far as this proves the Occaſion of ſhewing the Power of thy Grace. Let me, a Sinner, be humbled as Thou wilt, ſo Thou, my God, be glorified; and let this be my Joy.

O *Jeſus*, who, by thy Apoſtle, haſt given us this Aſſurance, that Thou wilt not ſuffer thy Servants to be tempted above their Strength, but that they ſhall make an Advantage by the Temptations, with which they

they are aſſaulted; mercifully fullfil this Promiſe in me, that I may ever find the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, in Proportion to the Attempts made againſt me; that ſo I may be faithful in reſiſting, and turn the Violence offered into the Occaſion of greater Triumph. This I can hope, if Thou ſhalt enable me by thy Grace; for, what are the greateſt Temptations to thoſe who are in the Hand of God? But if Thou leaveſt me to my own Weakneſs, then the lighteſt Temptations are Snares, and I ſhall certainly fall in them: For, what am I in my own Hand, but fit to be made a Prey?

Being obliged to confeſs this Truth, it is my hearty Deſire that I may be ever mindful of it, and that the Memory of it may make me fearful of running into Danger; for, I confeſs, O God, it muſt be nothing leſs than Madneſs in me to expoſe myſelf, who have nothing in myſelf to truſt to: Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O *Jeſus*, to grant me this Wiſdom, that, knowing myſelf to be helpleſs, I may never chuſe, nor be perſuaded to go into ſuch Circumſtances which require great Strength to ſtand ſecure: Rather may I be ever watchful againſt them, and hope for thy Mercy by being fearful of myſelf. And as for all other Temptations, which are not occaſioned by my Fault, in all them I beg Thee to be my Preſerver, and likewiſe implore thy Grace, that I may behave myſelf in them with that Care, Caution, and Prudence, as to move Thee to grant me all that Help which I want for my Security

curity againſt Sin. Thus, O God, be Thou my Guide and Protector, to carry me thro' all the Difficulties and Snares of this unhappy Life.

The WORLD.

IT being an Effect, O God, of thy Mercy towards me, to give me this Opportunity of Prayer, which many others want, I deſire to make the beſt Advantage of it I can, for the Glory of thy holy Name, and my eternal Good. Wherefore, being ſenſible how contrary the World is to thy Law, and by how many Ways it endeavours to draw me out of the Way of Happineſs, I now deſire to make an Intereſt with Thee againſt it, for the Remedy of all its Evils, and, in particular, that I may be more faithful to Thee than to have any Part in them.

Turn now, therefore, I beſeech Thee, thy Eyes towards me, an unhappy Creature, and have Compaſſion on me; for behold I am in the Midſt of many Dangers, and my Soul is encompaſſed with Snares. I am in the Midſt of a wicked World, a World which is created by Thee, and is the Effect of thy infinite Power; a World, which is daily repleniſhed with infinite Bleſſings from thy bountiful

bountiful Hand, and cannot ſubſiſt one Moment, but by the Effect of thy infinite Goodneſs; a World, which, being loſt by Sin, has been the Object of thy moſt tender Compaſſion, and redeemed with no leſs a Purchaſe than the Blood of thy only Son: And yet, O God (I am confounded to ſay it) it is ſet in as direct an Oppoſition againſt Thee, as if it had no Obligation to Thee, nor Dependance on Thee, and had no other Enemy, but only Thee alone. Nay, a Part of this World I am; and how ungratefully, how perverſely miſerable, if I join with it in its wicked Ways?

Wherefore I now make my Addreſs to thy Goodneſs, O God, moſt earneſtly imploring thy powerful Aſſiſtance, for the Help of this unhappy Sinner, againſt all the Dangers which threaten me on every Side. For this Weakneſs I muſt confeſs to Thee, O God, that, while I ſee and acknowledge this ſtrange Blindneſs, Ingratitude, and Madneſs of the World, I am ſo far from hating it, as I ought, that I am inclined to all its Ways; I think there is Happineſs and Greatneſs in them; I apprehend them as deſirable Goods; and I find ſo much Agreeableneſs and Charm in them, that I am every Day in Danger of taking part with the World, in what I ſo much condemn in it.

Theſe being my unhappy Circumſtances, have not I great Reaſon to implore thy Aſſiſtance, O God, where I am ſo much courted, and ſtrongly inclined to my own Deſtruction;

Deſtruction? Stand by me therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God of Mercy, and undertake my Defence againſt theſe ſo much prevailing Dangers. Stretch forth thy Arm of Strength, and be my Protector, that I be not worſted in many Aſſaults, that are made againſt me. Behold, of myſelf, I am capable of no Defence; there is neither Security, nor Strength, nor Help in me; I can expect nothing, but to be carried away with the Violence of the Torrent, if Thou, O God, doſt not ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and undertake my Cauſe.

Of this I have too ſad a Conviction from the Evidence of my paſt Years. For what do I ſee in them, but Marks of a long Slavery to the World? What has my Life been, but the Homage of a Captive Soul, ſeeking, admiring, courting, flattering, or fearing the World? Its Goods I have ſought with Eargerneſs; its Greatneſs I have admired; its Commendation and Applauſe I have courted; and have ſpared no Coſt, or Labour, or Contrivance, for obtaining what I ſo much deſired; its Extravagancies I have made my Rule; it has been my great Solicitude to follow them, and I have envied all thoſe, who were better provided for coming nearer up to them, than myſelf; its Follies, Vanities, and idle Liberties have made greater Impreſſions in my Soul, than all the Promiſes of Eternity, and have been much more the Object of my Thoughts, my Deſires, and my Contrivance; and O unhappy

Sinner

Sinner that I am, how often have I, for the Sake of theſe, even forſaken thy Law, tranſgreſſed thy Commandments, and provoked thy Diſpleaſure! Its Reproaches and Threats have, on the other Side, been as powerful with me; while, aw'd by the Apprehenſion only of theſe, I have not only omitted what I thought my Duty, but have often join'd with Sinners in doing what my own Conſcience and thy Law condemn'd, and thus have given evident Proof of my having a greater Fear of the World, than of Thee.

Having ſo large a Demonſtration againſt myſelf, of having made the World my Idol, of loving, ſerving, and fearing it more than Thee, my God; have not I Reaſon to diſtruſt myſelf; and, reſting with my whole Confidence in Thee, to confeſs that I have no Security againſt the Return of all this Unhappineſs, except Thou, O Lord, having Compaſſion on thy Servant, wilt mercifully prevent it by thy Grace? I again repeat therefore my Petition to Thee, to take me into thy Protection, and to confirm me with heavenly Strength; that, for the Time to come, I may be more wiſe, more reſolute, and more faithful, than to be directed by the World, or have any Regard to it, farther than the Neceſſities of Life oblige me; and that it may be done, without Injury to thoſe Duties which I owe to Thee, my God.

This I beg of Thee, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul; becauſe, by the Experience I have had, and by what I read in thy ſacred Word, I ſee very plainly, that the World is contrary to Thee; and its Ways contrary to what Thou teacheſt; and therefore that I cannot hear it, love it, and be directed by it, but by forſaking Thee, and departing from thoſe Paths, in which Thou haſt commanded me to walk. What therefore muſt I do, O God! Since the World is contrary to Thee, it muſt be the Effect of thy Grace, to ſtrengthen me againſt it, or elſe I ſhall be left miſerable, and periſh with it.

This I ſay, and I hope from my Heart, and yet I cannot but ſuſpect myſelf, as not fully convinced of this Perverſeneſs of the World, and of its being ſo deſtructive to thoſe that follow it. But where can be the Grounds for having a more favourable Opinion of it? Doſt not Thou ſee, my Soul, it ſets up directly againſt all that Chriſt hath taught? Does it not encourage that Pride, which the Goſpel condemns? Does it not promote Prodigality, Luxury, and all Manner of Exceſs? Does it not teach Thee to court Applauſe, and by all means to ſeek thy Intereſt, Eſteem, and Preferment? Does it not inſpire Thee with the Admiration of all that is vain, fooliſh, and extravagant, and ſet off an idle, diſorderly Life, as of all Things the moſt deſirable?

Does

Does it not perſuade Thee to flatter thy Appetite, to gratify thy Inclinations and Deſires? Does it not give an ill Name to Virtue, repreſent it as a Burthen, as taking away all the Comforts of Life, and deſtructive of Health? Has it not laid it under ſuch an ill Character, that Perſons are now aſhamed of doing what the Goſpel preſcribes; and to pretend to live up to it is to be pointed at with Reproach; whilſt Vice is become ſo faſhionable, that it is neither Matter of Surprize nor Scandal; and to undertake to reprove it, is to ſtand againſt a Stream, and to be laughed at for Singularity? So that it is become a very difficult Thing, for a Chriſtian to live in the World, and not join with it in its ſinful Extravagancies, or not to ſhare in its Guilt, by flattering its ſenſeleſs and unchriſtian Follies.

O God, I cannot but own this to be the unhappy Character of the World. Nay, I know Thou haſt declared to us, That *the whole World lieth in Wickedneſs*; *That the Friendſhip of this World is Enmity with God: That whoſoever will be a Friend of the World is the Enemy of God.* Nay, I know farther, Thou haſt given us this expreſs Command; *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him:* And again haſt repeated this Command; Be *not conformed to this World.* Where then, my Soul, canſt Thou now either demur or doubt? God has now told thee, what

the World is; he has given his Command to thee, That thou art neither to love it, nor be conform'd to it: And what then haſt thou now to do?

I have nothing to do, but to hear, believe, and obey Thee, my God; for I have it now written in my Heart, in thy own Words, That I am neither to love the World, nor follow it; and, if I do either, I am condemn'd in my own Conſcience, of departing from Thee, who alone haſt the Words of eternal Life. But then, O God, I beſeech Thee, to look upon me, and conſider the difficult Taſk I have; and according to my Neceſſities, to my Weakneſs, and to the manifold Dangers in which I am, and which are all known to Thee, ſo, O God, of Goodneſs and Mercy, be Thou a Helper to me.

And in the firſt Place, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, to take from my Heart all the Love of the World, and of the Things that are in it. Grant, O God, that I may neither admire its Vanities, nor eſteem its Greatneſs, nor deſire any of its ſinful and dangerous Entertainments. So diſengage my Heart from all theſe, that I may not, like a Heathen or Unbeliever, look upon them as the Comforts and Happineſs of Life; but rather be afraid of them, as the Goſpel directs, and fly from them, as the Snares of the Soul, which, by deceitful Flatteries, lead to eternal Death. For this End, I now moſt humbly aſk thy Grace, that I may not receive the Notion of worldly Things from the World; but

but that, applying myſelf to the Study of the holy Goſpel, I may, in that School, learn what every Thing is, and, as that teaches, ſo accordingly frame a Judgment of all earthly Things.

O God, how happy ſhould I be, were my Heart truly poſſeſſed with theſe Ideas, which alone are according to Truth! How would this deliver me from infinite Temptations, and ſecure me in thoſe great Dangers, where infinite Souls are loſt! Then ſhould I eſteem all the vain Things of the World, as they deſerve and are; that is, as Vanity and Smoke; and judge it moſt contemptible for a rational Soul, created for the eternal Poſſeſſion of God, to take Pleaſure and ſeek its Happineſs in ſuch Trifles. Then ſhould I judge all, that is ſinful, as it is; fly from it, as from the Way that leads to Hell; and ſee it to be Madneſs, to loſe Heaven for it.

Grant me, O God, this ſaving Knowledge, that I may no longer believe a Lye, and be wretchedly impoſed on, to the evident Hazard of my Soul. Grant me this Knowledge, that my Heart, being poſſeſſed with the Truth of Things, my Inclinations may be leſſened to all that is worldly, and I may rather hate than love, what is ſo deſtructive to my better Part. Help me, I beſeech Thee, in this Particular; purify my Soul from the Love of the World; create in me a clean Heart; that, hating what is ſinful, fearing what is dangerous, deſpiſing what is vain, I may be free from the

Snares of a worldly Soul, and reſerve my Heart for the Love and Deſire of Thee, my God, who alone art holy, who alone art good, and who alone art the true Happineſs of faithful Souls.

Another Petition I make to Thee, O God; that, by thy holy Grace, my Heart may be ſtrengthened againſt all Invitations to what is worldly; that I may not be prevailed on by Company, to join in any Thing that in my own Conſcience I know to be either ſinful, dangerous, or extravagant; or any ways diſagreeable to the ſolemn Vow I made at the Font, of renouncing the Devil, with all his Works and Pomps. In this Particular, I am ſenſible of a great Weakneſs, and therefore, knowing my Danger, implore now thy Aſſiſtance; that I may be reſolute in ſtanding to the Principles of the Goſpel: And rather chooſe to diſoblige all Friends, than be perſuaded to any Thing that will put me in Hazard of diſpleaſing Thee.

Grant me, likewiſe, that true Steadineſs of Mind, that I may never be moved by *Cuſtom*, or by the *Authority* of what others do; for I ſee theſe, in many Particulars, go beyond, if not contrary to what thy Law has preſcribed us; and many Things are made current by them, which have no Warrant in Scripture; ſo that, ſhould I follow where theſe lead, it would be thro' a Way widened ſo very much, that, I fear, it would ſcarce bring me to Happineſs. Rather, O Lord, let it be the Work of thy Grace in me, that I examine every Thing by that Rule,

Rule, which my Redeemer has given me; and by this may I be ever directed, without any Regard to whatever the World approves or diſapproves. For what can it be leſs than Madneſs, for a Chriſtian to conſult the World, when he knows it lies in Wickedneſs, and is contrary to God? Is this a Guide for one that believes in God! And what then muſt the Chriſtian be, who, knowing what God has ſaid, appeals from him to the World, to be informed what he is to do? Such Chriſtians muſt be very willing to be led out of the Way. O God, I beſeech Thee, never let me be one of thoſe unhappy ones, who, having Light to guide them, chooſe Darkneſs rather than Light.

To confirm me ſtill more in this Point, grant, O merciful God, that I may have no Regard to what the World ſays; eſpecially, that I may not be awed by the Apprehenſion of its Cenſures; but, at all Times, be ſolicitous to know thy holy Will, and do it; without ever being diſcouraged by its Cavils or Reproaches. This Grace I beg of Thee, O God, with the more Earneſtneſs, becauſe I know my Weakneſs in this Particular; as being too much inclined to conſider what Conſtruction the World will put upon what I ſay or do; in which I ſee, how great a Temptation the World is to me, and what my Danger is, of being influenced by it, even while I pretend to follow Thee. Have Compaſſion therefore on me, I beſeech Thee, and take away this Concern out of

my Heart; or ſo leſſen it, that I may reſolutely and chearfully perform thy Will in all Things, and never be diverted or hindered by any Conſideration of what will either pleaſe or diſpleaſe the World. Be Thou to me in all Things my Lord and my God; may I faithfully ſerve Thee, as thy Creature: But as for making an Idol of the World, and having more Reſpect to it, than to thy holy Will, far, O God, far be this from me.

O God, by whoſe Grace thy holy Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, were ſo preſerved amidſt all the Dangers of this World, that, while they were expoſed to its Temptations, and all their Lives were engaged in worldly Affairs, they ſtill continued faithful to Thee: Mercifully confirm my Heart by the ſame Grace; that, while I am engaged in this World, I may be careful in ſatisfying the Obligations of my State; without being drawn into Injuſtice, either by the Flatteries or Terrors of the World; but, amidſt all Temptations, may I ſtill remember, that Thou art my God.

O God, who didſt give to thy Servant *David* ſuch a Spirit, that, notwithſtanding all the Confuſions of War, and the many unavoidable Diſtractions of a Crown, he ſtill reſerved his Heart to Thee; ſeeking Thee daily in Prayer, and Faſting, and Tears, and Contrition, and Meditating on thy Law both Day and Night: Grant me, I beſeech Thee, a large Portion of this ſame Spirit; that I may learn the Practice of what I ſo much

much admire and want; of being careful, without Solicitude; of deliberating, without loſing myſelf; of following Buſineſs, without running after Follies; and of managing it, without Injuſtice; of being attentive to the Obligations of Earth, without omitting any Duty to Heaven. Hear me, O God, and, according to thy infinite Goodneſs, grant this my Petition; that, being placed in this World by thy Providence, I may have Patience under all its Neceſſities, and be neither oppreſſed by its Buſineſs, nor ſurprized in its Snares.

O God, by the Gift of whoſe Grace *Eſther* was ſo confirmed in Spirit, that being raiſed from a Captive to a Queen, and encompaſſed with all the ſplendid Charms of a Court, ſhe made this Declaration: That, from the Time ſhe came to that Dignity, *She had no Joy, but in Thee*; purify my Soul, I beſeech Thee, by the ſame Grace, that, being dead to the World, it may find no Comfort either in its Honours, Plenty, or Pleaſures: I wiſh I could ſay with holy *Eſther*, that I never have had any Joy in theſe; but pardon, O God, my paſt Follies; and now grant me that happy Change, that, for the future, I may become inſenſible, as to all the Invitations of Earth, and find no Joy but in Thee.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who didſt declare thyſelf, and thoſe, whom Thou haſt choſen, not to be of the World; mercifully grant, that, my Heart and Affections being taken off from the World, my whole Solicitude may be to hear and follow Thee; that, being

in the World, I may not be of it. For, O *Jeſus*, if Thou and thy choſen Servants are not of the World, how can I pretend to be thy Diſciple, if the World be that which I ſeek, love, deſire to pleaſe and enjoy? What can be more of the World, than to have a Heart ſo worldly?

O *Jeſus*, who haſt ſhewed us the Malignity of the World, in declaring, that it hated Thee and thy Diſciples; grant, I beſeech Thee, that from hence I may take the true Character of the World, and be ever afraid of loving it, ſince I muſt certainly be deceived in pretending to love Thee, if I love that which hates Thee. Root out therefore from my Soul all Love of the World, and turn my Heart againſt it; for what ought to be more deteſtable to a Diſciple of *Jeſus*, than that which is declared, by Truth itſelf, to be a Hater of *Jeſus?*

O *Jeſus*, who, by thy Apoſtle, haſt publiſhed this Truth in us, That *the Friendſhip of this World is Enmity with God*; and that, *Whoſoever will be a Friend of the World, is an Enemy of God*, I beſeech Thee to imprint this ſo deep in my Heart, that I may be as much afraid of loving the World, as of becoming thy Enemy. What can be more terrible to a Chriſtian, than to be the Enemy of God? And yet it is God himſelf has ſaid it; If I am a Friend of the World, I am the Enemy of God. O *Jeſus*, and what has been (and is ſtill) the great Buſineſs of my Life, but to court the World? In what has been taken up my great Solici-

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tude and Contrivance, but to follow it in all its Vanities? Have not I earneſtly deſired it; eagerly ſought it; given both my Thoughts, and Time and Money for gaining it; and thought myſelf happy in the Poſſeſſion of it; and what is it to be a Friend of the World, if this be not? And is not this to be thy Enemy? O God, work a Change in my Heart, that I may no more go on in this Way; but that I may be ſolicitous to depart from it, as from the Way that leads to an eternal Separation from Thee.

O *Jeſus*, who, by thy Apoſtle, haſt commanded us, *Not to love the World, nor to be conformed to it*; grant, I may no more be governed by the Maxims of the World; nor have any Regard to ſuch Cuſtoms and Practices of it, as, being diſagreeable to the Spirit of the Goſpel, have no other Authority to recommend them but Pride or Extravagance. It is Thou, who art my God, and not the World: It is Thou, my Lord, whom I am bound to ſerve; may it be my perpetual Care to do thy Will, and, as for the World, teach me O *Jeſus*, to deſpiſe it.

O *Jeſus*, who didſt chooſe thy Apoſtles out of the World, and command them to forſake all and follow Thee; mercifully vouchſafe ſo to call me out of the World, that, while I live in it, I may have no Part in its Sins, Vanities, or Follies; but that I may renounce all ſuch Inclinations, and ever remember it to be my Duty, not to follow it, but Thee. I know, all, that is in the World, is Vanity and Affliction of Spirit; I know, all its Greatneſs has its Trou-

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ble, and all its Satisfactions have their Sting; that all paſſes away like Smoke, and nothing remains of all the Labour and Coſt employed in it: Thus will it ſoon be with all that I do. And is this enough to forſake God, and to take in Exchange for him? O *Jeſus*, may I never be thus bewitched with Folly; teach me rather to deſpiſe, to renounce it all for the better ſecuring my Inheritance in Thee.

O *Jeſus*, if I renounce the deceitful Follies of the World, Thou haſt promiſed to be my eternal Poſſeſſion; and I believe Thee, becauſe Thou art the eternal Truth, and canſt not deceive; and, what a Mercy is it that Thou art pleaſed to offer ſuch Happineſs upon ſuch eaſy Terms! But what are become of all thoſe who, for ſo many Ages paſt, have courted the World, have admired its Vanities, have run after its Charms, have ſought its Greatneſs, and made all Chriſtian Duties yield for accompliſhing their Deſires; has the World made them happy? Has it ſecured them in the Poſſeſſion of what they ſo much admired? They abode here for a ſhort Time, for ſome paſſing Moments; but they are gone from hence, and are as much forgotten as if they never had been; their Fleſh is long ſince devoured, and Rottenneſs has conſumed their Bones. And their Souls, their better Part, which were created for God, where are they? They might have been with God, had they ſought and ſerved him as they did the World: But now they

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are left to the juſt Chaſtiſement of their own Folly; they had ſuch Happineſs as they ſought, ſuch as the World could give; but now they are under the Diſpleaſure of a neglected God, and being doomed by a Sentence which cannot be reverſed, have begun that Miſery which ſhall never end. Unhappy, miſerable, and wretched Souls, which might have had Part in the Happineſs of God, and now have their Portion with Devils, and this for to pleaſe a Carcaſs, and a treacherous World! Ah, *Jeſus*, deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from this Madneſs; give me Grace to perform the Conditions upon which eternal Bliſs is offered me; give me Grace to renounce all the ſinful Part of the World, and in Spirit to forſake the reſt, that my Heart may have this one Solicitude alone of gaining Thee. For what, O God, is all the World, compared to that Eternity which Thou offereſt to ſuch as ſeek and love Thee!

O *Jeſus*, who being Lord of all, and having the whole World at command, didſt chuſe ſo inconſiderable a Part as not to have where to lay thy Head; vouchſafe in thy Mercy to grant me this Spirit; that, ſince the Neceſſities of my State tie me to ſome Dependance on this World, I may ſeek and be contented with ſo much of it as is neceſſary for my Subſiſtence here; and, O God, how little is enough, if

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we look no farther, than what Nature requires for Food and Raiment! But, as for all the reſt, which is demanded by Vanity, Appetite, and to pleaſe the World; let thy Grace work this good Effect in my Soul, that I may look upon all this, as ſuperfluous; as the Root of infinite Temptations; as that, which draws the Soul into the World, and takes it off from the Concern of Eternity. O *Jeſus*, if this Diſpoſition were well fixed in my Soul, *To be contented with Neceſſaries*, how little a Part ſhould I have in the World; nay, how little would this World be to me? From how many Diſquiets and racking Solicitudes ſhould I then be delivered, and what a peaceable Liberty would my Heart enjoy for converſing with Thee, my God; for receiving thy holy Inſpirations; for hearing thy Voice; for obeying thy Calls, and approaching by Love to Thee? Hear me therefore, O *Jeſus*, and grant my Petition; that I may no longer go on, multiplying the Difficulties of my Salvation, by unneceſſarily engaging myſelf in the World, and every Day preparing Snares againſt my own Soul. Teach me to withdraw from the World; to withdraw, at leaſt, from all the unneceſſary Part of it: Teach me to deſpiſe all that is dangerous, extravagant, and vain in it: Teach me to love Solitude, for ſuch Retirement as my State will permit, that, while I am in the World, I may not be of it. Teach me to take Delight in converſing with Thee, in ſeeking Thee, and in employing my

my Time in ſuch holy and charitable Exerciſes, as are moſt acceptable to Thee; that, when I ſhall be called from hence, I may not be found a worldly Soul; but full of Joy, deſirous to leave this World, and to be received into thy holy Preſence. *Amen.*

The GOSPEL.

I Deſire to make Uſe of the Opportunity Thou haſt given me, O God, this Day, in returning Thee Thanks for the Mercy of the Goſpel of thy only Son having been preached to us; by which we are inſtructed in the Way of Salvation, and taught all thoſe Truths, which Thou requireſt thy Faithful to believe. For this Effect of thy Goodneſs, bleſſed be thy Name: Behold, I bow down before Thee; I adore, praiſe, and magnify thy holy Name; and with all Humility deſire, that whatever Knowledge I have of Thee may be wholly employed to thy Glory. I thank Thee likewiſe, for that, by the Appointment of thy Providence, the holy Goſpel has been committed to Writing; and not only wonderfully preſerved thro' ſo many Ages; but likewiſe carefully delivered down to our Days, for our Comfort and Inſtruction.

Grant,

Grant, O God, that I may always acknowledge this thy Mercy with Thankſgiving; and this not only in Words, but in making a good Uſe of it. May I never take it from the Paſtors of thy Church into my Hand, but with the Reſpect that is due; and, as often as I read it, let it be with the Deſire of knowing Thee, my God; of knowing thy Juſtice, that I may fear to offend Thee; of knowing thy Mercy, that, notwithſtanding my Unworthineſs, I may ſtill confide in Thee; of knowing thy Power, that I may be ever ſenſible of my entire Dependance on Thee, and learn to be faithful. Open likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, my Underſtanding, that I may have a true Senſe of what I read; and let my Reading be always attended with ſuch a true Spirit of Humility, that I may be contented under the Darkneſs of ſuch Myſteries as I cannot comprehend. Deliver me from all Self-conceit and Stubbornneſs of Judgment, that I may not pervert the Law againſt the Lawgiver, nor abuſe thy Words in oppoſing thy Truths or Ordinances.

I know the Danger of Miſtakes here; ſince, in whatever miſtaken Senſe I underſtand thy ſacred Word, I ſet up ſuch Miſtakes as thy divine Truths; I reſpect them as divine, I believe them as divine, I hear and follow them as divine. And what is this but canonizing my own Fancies, and ſtamping thy Divinity on my own falſe Imaginations? It is ſetting up Idols within myſelf; and reverencing that as the Word and

and Truth of God, which is nothing but a vain Conceit of my own. And how unhappy then muſt I be, in this Caſe, who, going on with Peace of Conſcience, and preſuming that I follow Thee, do, inſtead of Thee, follow and believe a Lye! Againſt this Idolatry, I own Thou haſt ſufficiently cautioned me, by informing me, That *no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation:* And *that the Unlearned and Unſtable wreſt it to their own Deſtruction.* Mercifully therefore deliver me from this Preſumption; that I may never be ſo ſacrilegious as to turn this divine Food into Poiſon, and pervert that to Death, which thy infinite Goodneſs has deſigned for Life. Keep me, I beſeech Thee, within the Bounds of my Station, and permit me not to break into thy Sanctuary. And ſince thy holy Scriptures were not penn'd, but as Men of God were mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt; ſo let me not depend on any Interpretation of them, but as it comes from the ſame Holy Spirit; and there may I ſeek to hear him, where Thou haſt promis'd he ſhall abide, and teach all Truth, to the End of the World.

But let not this be thy only Mercy to me, that I hear the Truth of thy Word from thy Holy Spirit: For this can avail me nothing, except I keep thy Word in Truth, as well as hear it. Shew therefore, I beſeech Thee, this Mercy to me, thy Servant, that I may not be contented with the Knowledge of thy Goſpel; but that I may be always ſolicitous to make this the Rule of my Life. Grant,

that

that in all Things I may walk, according as Thou haſt here preſcribed; that I may here ſee what is the Duty, and what ought to be the Life of a Chriſtian; that I may here enquire what Thou approveſt, and what Thou diſapproveſt; and ſo accordingly do in all Things, as Thou haſt been pleaſed there to manifeſt thy Will for our Direction.

I confeſs, that as Thou art my Lord and my God, and as I depend on Thee alone, for the future Happineſs which I expect; ſo it is moſt reaſonable and juſt, that I ſhould ſeek to do thy Will, and to work out my Salvation in ſuch a Manner, and by ſuch Means, as Thou haſt been pleaſed to preſcribe. For ſee, my Soul, is there any Power by which thou canſt be ſaved, except by God alone? Is there any other that can promiſe Thee Happineſs, or ſecure thy Eternity? No, my God, I confeſs it again, there is no other, and that I muſt either ſeek to do thy Will, or be loſt for ever.

I confeſs moreover, that as there is no Salvation, but through *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo there is nothing to be obtained through him, but by ſuch as obſerve his Words, and walk by his Doctrine, as it is ſet down in the Goſpel, and there recorded for the Direction of all his Followers: And conſequently, if I neglect the Goſpel, and do not make it the Buſineſs of my Life to walk by it, I build upon the Sand without a Foundation, and ſhall certainly periſh with my Hopes.

See then and recollect a-while ſome of thoſe Principles which the Goſpel teaches; and obſerve how far thou endeavoureſt to live by them: Firſt, I am there commanded to love God with all my Heart and Strength; to keep the Commandments; to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God; to ſeek and ſet my Affection on Things above, and not on Things on Earth; to put on our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, to live and walk by his Spirit; to keep his Day holy; not to take his Name in vain; nor to ſwear, *&c.*

2dly, I am commanded to love my Neighbour as myſelf: To do Good to all; to love my Enemies; to keep Peace; to forgive Injuries; to do Good for Evil; to pray for thoſe that perſecute and curſe me; to avoid Contention; to ſpeak Evil of none; to defraud, over reach, and do Wrong to none; not to lye nor ſteal; to put away from me all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Malice: To let no corrupt or filthy Communication to proceed out of my Mouth, nor any Uncleanneſs be once ſo much as named; to give Offence to none; to abſtain from all Appearance of Evil; to do all to Edification; to relieve the Poor; to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widow; to let my Converſation be, as becomes the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and walk worthy of my Vocation.

3dly, I am commanded to deny myſelf; to put off the Old Man; to mortify the Deeds of the Body; not to be carnally minded; to crucify the Fleſh; to abſtain from fleſhly

fleſhly Luſts which war againſt the Soul; to put on the New Man; to have *Chriſt* dwell in me; to walk in his Spirit; to become a new Creature; not to walk in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, but to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; not to exalt myſelf, nor be high-minded, nor be wiſe in my own Conceit, nor do any Thing through Vain-glory; not to commend myſelf, nor be deſirous of Vain-glory, nor be proud; but to be meek and lowly in Heart, and to humble myſelf; not to murmur, not be tired, impatient, or faint-hearted; but to ſuffer all Troubles with Submiſſion and Patience, according to the Example of *Chriſt*; not to live an idle and unprofitable Life; but to watch, pray, faſt, abound in good Works, and bring forth Fruit to Life everlaſting; not to love the World, but to be poor in Spirit; to be afraid of Riches; to look upon the Things highly eſteemed among Men, as an Abomination in the Sight of God; to love nothing above God; to renounce all Things for the Law of God; to do all in the Name of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; to ſee that God be glorified in all Things; to be moderate in all Things; to be without Solicitude; to think on and follow whatever Things are honeſt, whatever Things are juſt, whatever Things are pure, whatever Things are of good Report, and to offer myſelf a living Sacrifice to God.

Obſerve, my Soul, what thy Lord here ſays to Thee; theſe are ſome principal Rules given Thee by thy Redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt*; and thou

thou, in profeſſing thyſelf a Chriſtian, undertakeſt to keep them: This is thy Profeſſion, and thou canſt no otherwiſe ſatisfy the Obligation of thy Name and Calling, but by propoſing them as thy Rule, and continually endeavouring to bring thy Life up to them. Hear this from the Mouth of *Chriſt* himſelf; for it is he has ſaid; *If ye abide in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed:* And is not this to give Thee a poſitive Aſſurance, That thou canſt not be his Diſciple indeed, if thou doſt not abide in his Word and keep it? O bleſſed *Jeſus*, it has been thy Goodneſs to call me to a Faith in Thee, and to hear thy Word; let it be now the Effect of the ſame Goodneſs, to make me zealous in keeping it, that beſides the Name I may be likewiſe a Diſciple indeed.

It is he likewiſe, the good Shepherd, has ſaid, That his Sheep *hear his Voice* and *follow him*; That he *has given unto them eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh.* And doſt not thou ſee here, that to be one of his Fold, thou muſt not only *hear his Voice*, but thou muſt likewiſe *follow him?* And, if thou doſt not follow him, thou haſt not the Character of thoſe who are to receive from him eternal Life, and ſhall never periſh. And has not he again publiſh'd the ſame, in declaring thoſe *bleſſed, who hear the Word of God and keep it?*

I confeſs it, O *Jeſus*, that theſe are thy Words; and as I have a Faith in Thee, my Redeemer, ſo I believe Thee in this; That I can

I can no otherwiſe be thy Diſciple, but by making it my daily Endeavour to keep thy Word, and that upon no other Condition can I be of thy Fold, and expect the Bleſſing of eternal Life, which Thou haſt promiſed. And what do I now do in this, but condemn myſelf, if I do not keep thy Words, and obſerve the Rule which Thou haſt given me! Compare then thy Life with the Rule, and ſee, upon what Foundation thy Hope ſtands. Do I love God with all my Heart? Do I ſeek him before all Things? Do I walk by the Spirit of *Chriſt?* Have I put off the Old Man? Do I not love the World? Do I follow Humility, Meekneſs, and Patience?

Under what Confuſion now is my diſtempered and unhappy Soul! I confeſs, there is no Hope of future Happineſs, but upon walking by the Goſpel; and when I begin to take a Review of myſelf, I find the State of my Soul quite contrary to what is there preſcribed; nothing is as it ought to be, O God, and what is now left for me to do, but to appeal to thy Goodneſs to have Compaſſion on me! I confeſs my great Unworthineſs, in having ſo many Years made Profeſſion of being thy Diſciple, without having ever ſeriouſly conſidered the Conditions which Thou offereſt to thy Followers. I confeſs my Iniquity, in having undertaken to ſerve Thee; and now, in making up my Accounts, I find I have been in the Service of thy Enemies; I have followed the World and my own Corruption; and to theſe have turn'd the great Endeavours

of

of my Life; having reſerved only ſome few Formalities, with ſome Lip-ſervice for Thee, my God.

What is there in my whole Life, but a long Series of Vanity, Idleneſs, Prodigality, and Exceſs? What has there been but a Change of Pride and Self-love in all their Shapes? And if I have ever pretended to amend, what has this been more, but ſome ſhort Interruption of my Follies, or the ſhifting from one Evil to another? Have not I lived almoſt in a general Forgetfulneſs of Thee, my God? and inſtead of loving and ſeeking Thee, before all Things, I have given my Heart to the Things of this World, and even preferred the vileſt of them before Thee. Thus have I neglected thy Goſpel; Nature and the World have been my Rule; the Buſineſs and Follies of this World have been my Employment; Idleneſs and Sin have been my Satisfaction; the Goods of the Earth have been the Object of my Deſires and Labour; and Heaven has been as little my Concern, as if it were a Matter of Indifferency, whether I gain'd it or no.

All this my Miſery, and much more is known to Thee, O God, and from Thee alone is the Remedy to come; for although I have thus unworthily forſaken Thee; yet ſtill I confeſs all my Help is in Thee, whoſe Goodneſs I believe ſo infinite, that the Number of my paſt Sins ought not to deſtroy my Hope of finding in Thee the Remedy of all my Unhappineſs. Raiſed therefore by this Hope,

Hope, I now make my Addreſs to thy Throne of Mercy, moſt humbly beſeeching Thee, to look with Compaſſion upon this unworthy Sinner, and to grant my Petition: And that is, that thy holy Word may be a Light to my Feet, that I may be directed by it in all my Ways; and that thy ſacred Goſpel may be the Rule of my Life.

It is only by this Way I can return to Thee, my God; and whatever may be propoſed, yet I know there is no other Help for me, but in this. Hear therefore, I beſeech Thee, the Prayer I make to Thee, and grant my Requeſt. Fix this Principle in my Soul, That nothing can be well done, nothing beneficial to me, nothing acceptable to Thee, but what is according to the Goſpel. Hence, O God, let thy holy Grace always carry me on in this conſtant Practice of examining all Things by the Goſpel, and not to take any Thing for good and lawful, but as it ſtands there approved by Thee.

Far be it therefore from me, for what remains of my Life, to conſider my own Inclination, or to conſult the World, or the Cuſtoms and Practices of worldly Perſons. Theſe are fit Guides for ſuch Chriſtians, as, being without the Life of Faith, ſeek their Happineſs in pleaſing themſelves and the World: But as for me, O God, who have renounced this Practice of Unbelievers, and deſire with all my Soul to walk in all thy Ways, to do thy Will, and ſerve Thee faithfully; let thy Grace ſo work in my Heart, that I may never

ver more have Regard to the Suggeſtions of ſuch falſe Guides, which lead to Sin and Death; but that I be directed in all Things by a better Light, even the Light of thy Goſpel, and by this be governed in whatever I am to do.

I am ſenſible of many Difficulties I ſhall certainly meet in this Way: Nature will be uneaſy, and rebel; I ſhall be expoſed to Variety of Cenſures; and, if the World cannot prevail with the Arguments of Authority and Cuſtom, it will try what may be done by Reproach and Scorn. But, O God, none of theſe, I hope, through thy Grace, ſhall diſcourage me. For what is Nature and the World, but Corruption? Being contrary to Thee, their Oppoſition muſt be expected by ſuch as reſolve to do thy Will. But what is their Oppoſition to a Soul that has Eternity in its Eye, and is marching on ſtrongly towards it? They may give Diſquiets; but certainly, neither their Flattery, nor their Scorn, can be of any Weight, when Eternity is on the other Side. No, my God, they are nothing.

But ſuch is my Weakneſs, I cannot yet confide, but only in thy Protection. Strengthen me therefore, I beſeech Thee, againſt all ſuch Oppoſition; and by thy Grace carry me on, in the Way I propoſe, with ſo much Steadineſs, that, whatever Diſcouragements I meet, I may ſtill purſue my Courſe; always attentive to thy Law, and walking by it; and pitying thoſe who make uſe of Cuſtom or Reproach, to perſuade me to leave

my Guide. I own it my Profeſſion to follow the Goſpel, and have in this the Comfort of being led by Thee. And ſhall any Thing prevail to make me quit this Happineſs? Suffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to be thus blind; ſince whatever it be that prevails againſt the Goſpel, ſo far takes Place of Thee; and what greater Madneſs, what groſſer Idolatry than this!

If then Cuſtom at any Time be preſſed, give me Courage to profeſs that Thou, Lord, art my God, and that I cannot give Cuſtom the Preference to Thee. If ſcornful Cenſures follow me cloſe, let me ſtill profeſs that Thou art my God, whom I have choſen, and be more ſerious in my Profeſſion, than to be laughed out of my Duty. If I had never been told what the World is, its Authority might have inclined me to hearken to it, and to have regarded its Ways. But now, when Thou thyſelf has informed me what it is, and that its Averſion is ſo great to thy Ways, as even to hate Thee; and that thy Followers are likewiſe to be the Object of its Hatred; how can I think of giving ear to it, or what need I to be concerned either at its Advice or Cenſures? If I regard it in either Way, it is an evident Sign I have little Regard to Thee, who haſt given me ſuch Caution againſt it. And what then muſt be my Crime, if I not only hearken to it, but am awed by its Authority, ſeek its Approbation, fear its Reproof, conſult it in all I have to do, and even take its Opinion, in expounding and making Com-

Comments on thy Goſpel; and this, when Thou haſt aſſured me, that it hates Thee?

O God, if I have been ſo unchriſtian, it is what I am aſhamed of, and now heartily deſire to amend. Wherefore I now take thy Goſpel for my Guide again, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul beg thy Grace, that in all Things I may be governed by it, and may never more permit any Thing in this World to draw me out of the Way which it teaches. Confirm me, I beſeech Thee, in this Reſolution; carry me on with Conſtancy and Perſeverance, and let thy Grace eſtabliſh my Heart againſt all Oppoſition. My Deſire is to walk in thy Ways; and of whom ſhould I learn thy Ways but of Thee? My Deſire is to come to Thee, and who can better teach the Ways that lead to Thee, than thyſelf? May I never therefore conſult or take that for my Guide, which, being contrary to Thee, muſt certainly put me out of the Way.

O God, who ſo often didſt give in Charge to thy People to keep thy Precepts, obſerve thy Statutes and Judgments, and to walk in thy Law; and, upon this Condition only, didſt promiſe thy Protection and Bleſſings to them: Mercifully grant I may always have this in my Remembrance; and that the Hope, which is in me, of coming to thy Promiſes, may be always attended with a perpetual Care, and zealous Endeavour for obſerving thy Law, and performing whatever thou requireſt of me.

O God, who didſt order thy Servants *Moſes* and *Aaron* to conſult Thee in all Things, and to know thy Will in whatever they were to undertake: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may always follow this Method of enquiring what is thy holy Will: And ſince Thou haſt been pleaſed to manifeſt thy Will in the Goſpel, give me Grace at all Times to conſult this, and there to ſee what my Lord ſpeaks to me; and, O God, let it be my conſtant Practice, to do in all Things as Thou directeſt.

O God, by whoſe Grace thoſe good Kings, *David*, *Hezechias*, and *Joſiah*, did obſerve thy Ordinances and Statutes, and walk in all thy Precepts; grant I may be always mindful of this being my Duty; and that, having thy Precepts recorded in the Goſpel, I may always remember that is my Rule; and that I can no otherwiſe expect thy Favour, but by walking in all Things according as Thou haſt there commanded.

O God, who didſt forſake even thy choſen People, and deliver them up to Captivity and Deſtruction; becauſe they departed from thy Law which Thou gaveſt them to keep, mercifully poſſeſs my Heart with the Fear of tranſgreſſing thy Commands; and ſince the Goſpel now ſucceeds the Law, and is delivered to us to be obſerved by a greater Authority; may I be always mindful of the great Obligation I have of following it; and that, if I follow it not, I provoke thy Diſpleaſure, ſhall be rejected by Thee, and reſerved

ſerved for heavier Judgments, than thoſe which were the Puniſhment of the *Jews*.

O bleſſed *Jeſus*, who becameſt Man for the Redemption of Man, and both by Doctrine and Example haſt taught him the Way to Salvation: Mercifully grant, that, as I hope for no Salvation, but through Thee; ſo I may be ever careful to direct my Life in all Things, according as Thou haſt taught.

O *Jeſus*, who haſt declared thyſelf to be the Light of the World; grant that I may, all my Life, take Thee for my Guide, and bluſh under the Profeſſion of thy Name, to follow any other, while I have Thee to lead me. I confeſs, O *Jeſus*, Thou art the ſubſtantial Sovereign and original Reaſon; and that I am not capable of diſcerning Truth from Falſhood, nor Good from Evil, but only as Light is communicated from Thee, who art the eternal Reaſon; vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, to communicate thyſelf ſtill more and more to my Soul, ſo to chaſe away from it whatever yet remains of falſe Light and true Darkneſs, that I may love Thee above all, follow Thee before all, and give thy holy Goſpel the Preference to all other Light, that offers itſelf for my Conduct.

O *Jeſus*, who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Way, by thy Example; the Truth, by thy Word; the Life, by thy Grace: I confeſs, that out of this Way there is nothing but going aſtray; without this Truth, there is nothing but Error and Deceit; without this Life, there is nothing but

Death: Grant therefore, I beſeech Thee, that I may never transfer to any Thing of this World, what Thou haſt thus appropriated to thyſelf; ſince I can expect nothing leſs, but to be led out of the Way, to meet with Error and Death, if neglecting Thee, who haſt undertaken this Charge, I depend on any Thing elſe. O *Jeſus*, behold I ſtretch forth my Hand to Thee, to be recovered from all my evil Ways: I open my Ears to Thee, to be taught the Truth: I open my Heart, that I may receive thy Life of Grace.

O Jeſus, whom, by a Voice from Heaven, we are commanded to hear; and who, by thy own ſacred Mouth, haſt declared, that, if we hear not Thee, we are not of God: Grant me this Grace, I beſeech Thee, that I may always hear Thee; that I may be taught by Thee, and not by the World; that from Thee I may learn what is honourable, what is great, what is valuable, what is baſe, what contemptible, what is to be ſought, what deſired, what feared, what to be deſpiſed, what abhorred, and what to be fled from. All this the World undertakes to teach, and it has great Numbers of Hearers and Followers; but, the World being falſe, all that hear it hear a Lye, and all that follow it follow Deceit. It is Thou, O Jeſus, who art the only Truth, and I cannot be led in the Way of Truth, except I hear Thee. Grant me then this my Requeſt, that I may hear and believe what Thou teacheſt; this can be the only Way to Happineſs, ſince I have thy Word

Word for it, that they, who hear Thee not, are not of God.

O Jeſus, who didſt call upon *Saul* in the Way, going to perſecute thy Servants, and by whoſe Grace he was ſo changed, as to ſurrender himſelf intirely to thy holy Will, with this Oblation of himſelf; *Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?* Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, by the Call of the ſame Grace, I may be ſtopp'd in whatever Ways I go contrary to thy bleſſed Will; and that now, with the Sincerity of St. *Paul*, I may offer myſelf to follow no other Guide but Thee alone. Behold, now I ſay, and, I hope, from my Heart, *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* Let not the World, nor worldly Perſons, ſpeak to me; but ſpeak Thou, Lord, to thy Servant, and teach me thy Will. But this Mercy I have already received; Thou haſt taught me, in the Goſpel, thy holy Will, and, if I walk not by that, I own there can be no Sincerity in my Deſire of being taught by thee.

Good Government of the TONGUE.

COnvinced of my own Weakneſs, by the ſad Experience of many Sins, I now come to aſk Help of Thee, my God; and, in particular, this Day, that I may obtain

thy holy Grace, for the Government of my Tongue, ſo as to prevent the Return of thoſe many Sins, by which I have hitherto offended Thee in Words.

And in the firſt Place, I petition for the Help of thy Grace, that I may no more take thy holy Name in vain. In this Particular I confeſs my Sin to Thee, O God; that, not conſidering the holy Reſpect due to thy Name, I have often uſed it vainly, heedleſly, and unprofitably; I have made it ſerve for every idle Exclamation; and, whether in Joy or Sorrow, have ſtill made this the common Expreſſion of every Surprize or Paſſion: So that, whether pleaſed or diſpleaſed, I have ſtill prophaned thy holy Name.

This, I confeſs, has been a great Weakneſs and Blindneſs in me; that whereas Thou haſt given me this Charge amongſt the very firſt of thy Commandments, and expreſly forbidden me to take thy Name in vain; I have, notwithſtanding, gone on unthinkingly in this Practice, as if it were wholly innocent, and I had never heard of any Command to the contrary.

But behold now, my God, I beg Pardon for the infinite Times I have, in my paſt Life, thus prophaned or abuſed thy holy Name; as likewiſe for the Scandal and ill Example I have given by ſo doing. I am ſenſible how forward ſome are in learning what they hear; and how others are inclined to think that innocent which they ſee generally practiſed. Now, how muſt this raiſe my Account, who, by an

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ill Cuſtom of ſo many Years, have taught others to offend, and bring thy Name, O God, into Contempt?

But forgive me now, I beſeech Thee, and give me Grace to amend; give me Grace to be watchful in overcoming this ill Cuſtom; for, altho' I reſolve upon Amendment, I know my Reſolutions will come to nothing, except by due Watchfulneſs I keep a Guard upon my Lips, and by continual Solicitude endeavour to prevent all Relapſe, into which, otherwiſe, I ſhall unthinkingly fall.

For thus I have been already often ſurprized, falling under this Guilt, without thinking what I ſay. And upon this Head I am eaſy in excuſing myſelf, becauſe whatever I do, of this kind, is generally without Reflection. And yet, O God, I have Reaſon to fear thy Judgments will be very different from mine: Since upon better Conſideration I can likewiſe apprehend, that it muſt be a great Fault in me, to let this ill Practice grow into ſuch a Cuſtom, as to run naturally into Sin, without ſeeing or knowing what I do. And does not this plainly diſcover a great Indiſpoſition of Soul, even at preſent; that I have not that true Fear of offending God as I ought? For, were my Soul duly poſſeſſed with this holy Fear, it is impoſſible I ſhould have Sin ſo often upon my Lips, in my Ears, and before my Eyes, and not ſtart at it, as at a Monſter. If I fear God, why have I not a Horror of Sin? How can I meet it at every Turn, and paſs it by without any Con-

cern? Can I do thus with a Snake or Viper, or with an Enemy that I fear?

It is plain too, that I have not that true Reſpect for God as I ought, nor am ſo zealous for his Honour; ſince, where-ever this Reſpect and Zeal are, they preſently are in Motion, and conceive a Horror of whatever is a Prophanation to him. Can Zeal ſtand unconcerned, when it ſees the Veſſels of the Temple put to common Uſes? Can the Altar of God be pulled down and trampled on by ſacrilegious Feet, and Zeal ſtand by without obſerving it? How then can the Zeal of God be in me, who am ſo often offering Violence to the moſt ſacred Name of God; to that Name which God has declared to be holy, and commanded me to keep holy, and yet be unconcerned, unmoved, and even not to take notice of what is done.

O God, I acknowledge the Fault, and ſee there lies a very great Neglect at the Root of it, which I now implore thy Grace to remedy. Let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, I beſeech thee, not only to pretend, but to have a real Zeal for thy Honour; ſuch a Zeal as will tolerate nothing diſreſpectful to Thee, and will not lie ſtill while thy holy Name is prophaned; ſuch a Zeal as will ſet a Watch upon my Lips, and permit nothing to paſs there uncenſur'd, which, not regarding the Sanctity of thy Name, puts it to common Uſes. Make me thus watchful, O God, and let me never believe that I love Thee, till

till by the Fear of offending I have reformed this ill Cuſtom, and never more take thy holy Name in vain.

Help me, O God, in this Particular, and let not this Deſire of Amendment paſs away, as a barren Thought without Fruit; but grant I may ſee the Effect of my Deſires. Grant I may be truly in Earneſt, and even deſire Friends to put me in Mind of my Fault, if I ſtill continue heedleſs, and unknowingly go on to offend Thee. And if this will not do, why ſhould I not puniſh my Heedleſsneſs, and by due Correction awaken my Soul to a greater Care? This Method I think reaſonble with others under my Care, to uſe Correction where Advice is without Effect: And if this Correction be what Duty, and Love, and Charity require, why ſhould not I be as charitable to myſelf, as to others, and omit nothing that may be a Means of Amendment? O God, never let me ſpare myſelf, where Juſtice calls for Puniſhment; where an obſtinate or careleſs ill Cuſtom wants Correction, and where Sparing is in Favour of Sin. If I do otherwiſe, there is too much Reaſon to believe I am not in Earneſt in what I propoſe, deſire, or reſolve.

And ought not this much more to be done, if I have a Cuſtom of prophaning the Name of God, by Swearing, Curſing, or any Kind of Oaths? Theſe are certainly the greater Sins, and give the much greater Scandal; they are more injurious to God,

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are ſo much againſt Charity, and lay the Name of God under ſuch intolerable Contempt, that they ought not to be found in the Mouths of Chriſtians, but only of Devils. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to give me ſuch an Abhorrence of theſe, that I may never be thus prophane; and that, as far as I am ſubject to any Cuſtom of this kind, I may leave no Way untried, till I have overcome it. What is there too much for me to ſuffer, if I know myſelf to be ſuch a Criminal? And what can be too hard to undertake, if it be with Hopes of Amendment? Am I fit to enter into the Company of thoſe happy Souls, who are always bleſſing God, if I ſhould be now called out of this World? Can I expect my Prophanations and Curſes ſhould be changed into Allelujahs? What then is it I do! Not fit to die, and yet go on without doing any Thing, in Order to become better! He, that drove the prophane Traders out of the Temple with a Scourge, tells me what is waiting for me, if I do not amend. He tells me, that Prophaneneſs deſerves a Scourge, and is to be puniſhed, if not cured by it. I have no other Way then of eſcaping the Scourge in God's Hand, but by taking it into my own, and uſing Violence againſt that which will not be better by milder Methods. Grant, O God, that I may uſe ſuch Means as may be effectual, through thy Bleſſing, for remedying the Diſorder of my Soul.

Another

Another Bleſſing I aſk of Thee, Father of Mercy, that, by the Help of thy holy Grace, I may be preſerved from the Sin of Lying; becauſe I know this is contrary to thy great Attribute of Truth, and is an Abomination to Thee. And in the firſt Place preſerve me, I beſeech Thee, from all Lyes of Malice, ſuch as, beſides the great Offence againſt Thee, are injurous to my Neighbour. Theſe are Sins againſt Charity, or that great Precept of loving my Neighbour; it being impoſſible, I ſhould have this Love for my Neighbour in my Heart, if I not only am deſirous to hurt him, but likewiſe invent Lyes, ſo to diſcharge my Malice againſt him. And if I have not Charity, how deſperate muſt my Condition be, ſince, without this, I have thy Word for it, that neither Faith, Alms, nor Martyrdom will be available, and that I am not in a State of Salvation?

O God, what an unhappy State is this, thro' the great Deformity and Provocation of this Sin! Wherefore I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, O God, thro' thy Bowels of Mercy, to forgive me whatever Degree of Guilt I have at any Time contracted in my Life paſt, by this kind of Lying, whether thro' Raſhneſs, Paſſion or Malice. For however great my Sin has been, yet I know thy Mercy is infinitely greater than my Wickedneſs; and, if I ſincerely from my Heart repent, I have a Hope in thy Goodneſs, thro' the Merits of Chriſt my Redeemer, I ſhall receive Pardon.

Behold

Behold then, O God, I proteſt before Thee, it grieves me from my Heart, that I have thus yielded to my Paſſion, and, in Compliance with this, deſpiſed thy Will, and trampled upon thy Commandments. I am heartily ſorry for whatever Injury I have done my Neighbour, by my malicious or raſh Accuſations. I reſolve thro' thy Grace, to make him Recompence for what he has ſuffered through my Wickedneſs; and I beſeech Thee, O Father of Mercies, to encreaſe thy Bleſſings upon him, and to let thy Goodneſs abundantly ſupply whatever he has been wronged by me.

But then, O God, let thy Goodneſs ſo favour me, thy unworthy Petitioner, as mercifully to forgive me my Sin, and to poſſeſs my Soul with ſuch a real Horror of it, as never more to fall under the Guilt of it again. Strengthen me, I beſeech Thee, for this End, by thy holy Grace, that I may no more yield myſelf a Captive to my Paſſion, and be blindly led by it into Wickedneſs. Help me to ſtifle all ſuch ſinful Suggeſtions; and may I rather chooſe to ſuffer all Injuries chearfully, and forgive them, as Thou haſt commanded, than ſeek to gratify my own Corruption, by offending Thee, by wronging my Neighbour, and bringing eternal Ruin upon myſelf. Thus, O God, by the Effect of thy holy Grace, may all Relapſes into this Iniquity be prevented.

Preſerve

Preſerve me likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, O God, from all thoſe Lyes which are in the Service of Vanity. I confeſs my Weakneſs in this Point, and that, upon infinite Occaſions, I am in Danger of falling into this Sin; but, how many Times I have incurred the Guilt of it, is known only to Thee, O God. But, behold, I come now before Thee to aſk for Mercy. I am ſenſible the Provocation muſt be very great, for ſuch a poor and ſinful Worm as I am, to be ſo ſolicitous for the good Opinion of the World, as to take Shelter in a Lye, as often as it ſeems ſerviceable for patching up my Reputation, and thus to ſet thy holy Will and Commandments under my Feet, whenever a vain Humour is in want of ſuch a Support.

How prophane and ſacrilegious does this look, upon ſuch trivial Occaſions, to make bold with thy Commands! To proſtitute thy holy Law to my Vanity! O God, be merciful to me, and pardon me this my repeated Iniquity. I am truly confounded at the Thought of it, that I ſhould profeſs Thee to be my God, and that my whole Dependance, both temporal and eternal, is on Thee; and yet to have no more Reſpect for thy Precepts, than to let every idle Humour withdraw me from my Obedience. O God, I can make no Excuſe for this my Weakneſs, my Unworthineſs, and my Folly. I know it deſerves Chaſtiſement: I own the Sin, and ſhall confeſs thy Judgments to be juſt, if I feel thy Scourge.

But

But however, O my God, knowing how infinite thy Mercies are, I beſeech Thee to have Regard to the Sighs of a poor Sinner. I confeſs now my Sin before Thee, and from my Heart grieve that I have been ſo unworthy. I here renew my Purpoſes of being more faithful to Thee; and make now a Proteſtation, that through the Help of thy Grace, I will tell no more Lyes in compliance with Vanity; but make it my Choice, for the Time to come, rather to loſe the good Opinion of others, than ſeek it by Untruths, and by offending Thee.

Help me, O moſt gracious Lord, in faithfully performing what I here propoſe; for I have no Truſt in myſelf, but all my Confidence is in Thee. Look then down, I beſeech Thee, upon a poor, unhappy Sinner; and, ſince my Deſires of Amendment are ſincere, favourably grant my Petition, and, by thy holy Grace, confirm me againſt all my uſual Weakneſs. Leſſen in me all Inclinations to Vanity, and let the Fear of offending Thee give an effectual Check to all its ſinful Suggeſtions. Let my great Concern be not to pleaſe the World, but Thee, my God; let me not be ſolicitous what Men ſay of me, but only to be in thy Favour. Let thy holy Love rule in my Heart, and then my great Buſineſs will be to keep thy Commandments; and I ſhall think nothing of this World ſo valuable, as for it to incur thy Diſpleaſure.

Beſides

Beſides this Mercy, I have ſtill another to aſk of Thee; that Thou preſerve me from all excluſive Lyes. In this I confeſs myſelf ſubject to a very great Weakneſs; being ever ready with a Lye, as often as it ſeems neceſſary for concealing my Faults, Weakneſs, Forgetfulneſs, Overſights, Miſtakes or Neglects. In theſe, and infinite other Occaſions, I make a Lye my Defence, and hide one Fault with another. But for this, O God, I now beg thy Mercy, beſeeching Thee to have Compaſſion on me, an unworthy Sinner, who have ſo many Times, even without Number, forgotten or neglected thy holy Will, and have let every trivial Occaſion be enough for me to offend againſt it.

In this I ſee a very great Weakneſs in myſelf, who, rather than bear any Blame, tho' it be what I deſerve, chooſe to incur thy Diſpleaſure, and, at any Time, venture thy Anger to ſave myſelf from the Anger or ill Opinion of Men. In this, I confeſs, O God, there is no Sign that I either love Thee or fear Thee, ſince, being obliged to do thy Will, and ſo to give it the Preference to all other Things, as to ſuffer all Extremities, rather than tranſgreſs it, I let every Thing take Place, and have not Courage to ſuffer the leaſt Inconvenience for thy Sake. Ah, wretched Creature, is this to be a faithful Servant to thy God! If he be thy God, where is thy Reſpect? Where is thy Solicitude to pleaſe him, and thy Fear to offend him?

And is there not a great Unworthineſs in this; that whereas Thou pretendeſt to truſt in God, and to ſeek Help from him in all Difficulties, Thou no ſooner apprehendeſt any Difficulties, but preſently, unmindful of thy Poſſeſſion, Thou runneſt to the Devil for Help, and takeſt up his Arms to defend thyſelf? For what is a Lye? Is it not from the Devil? Is it not the Help which he offers Thee? It is what thou oughteſt to renounce, as unworthy of thy Profeſſion; and, inſtead of this, thou readily acceptеſt his Offer, and art pleaſed in being thus protected. Ah, my Soul, bluſh in being thus falſe to what thou haſt undertaken. Conſider the Baſeneſs of this Submiſſion. Humble thyſelf before thy God, beg Pardon for the many Times thou haſt thus offended, and reſolve now no more to ſeek Help from him who deſigns nothing but thy Ruin.

O merciful God, pardon me this my great Weakneſs and Unworthineſs, and give me Grace now to deteſt it, as it deſerves. May I now conceive that true Horror of it, as to reſolve never to make Uſe of ſuch unchriſtian Help, but willingly to bear any Reproof or Reproach, rather than be protected by a Lye. This, O God, is my ſincere Deſire, and I beſeech Thee now ſo to ſtrengthen my Soul, that I may ſee my Deſires accompliſhed, that I may break off all ill Cuſtoms, and be more watchful againſt all Surprizes. I am ſenſible, how averſe Self-love is

is to all Kinds of Suffering, and I know too there is Comfort in ſuch Suffering, which a Chriſtian ſubmits to, rather than to ſave him by a Lye; becauſe this is all for Duty ſake, and embraced as much better, than to purchaſe an Exemption by Sin. This Comfort I deſire to ſeek for the Time to come; the Comfort of ſuffering for Conſcience, rather than accept of ſuch Peace, as is not from Thee.

Beſides this, I beg likewiſe thy Grace, O God, to be preſerved from all inconſiderate Lyes; ſuch as are occaſioned by Raſhneſs, or too great a Forwardneſs in Speaking. This, I know is another Weakneſs, diſpleaſing to Thee, O God, by offending againſt Truth; and of ill Repute amongſt Men, as proceeding from a certain Lightneſs of Mind, and laying thoſe, who are ſubject to it, under the Diſreputation, *of not being to be regarded in what they ſay.* Againſt this Evil therefore, O loving Father, I aſk thy Aſſiſtance; beſeeching Thee to give me ſuch a Zeal for Truth, that I may be conſiderate and wary in every Thing I ſay, ſo as never to let my Tongue get the Start of my Thoughts, and be thus ever in Danger of doing Violence to Truth. Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all Talkativeneſs and Inconſiderateneſs, the Origin of many Sins, and very ſerviceable to the Devil. Give me the Spirit of Diſcretion and Wiſdom, ſuch Wiſdom, as may diſcover to me my own Weakneſs, and make

me

me very careful in providing againſt all the evil Effects of it. Teach me to keep a ſeaſonable Silence, and to have a true Value for it, that I may make it my conſtant Practice, rather to ſay nothing, than to offend by ſpeaking. This will not be ſo entertaining; But, O God, I own it both my Buſineſs and Intereſt, not to pleaſe the World, but Thee.

§. II.

Preſerve me likewiſe, O God, from all other Sins of the Tongue; from all irreligious and profane Diſcourſe; let nothing that is filthy or immodeſt be heard from my Mouth: Deliver me from all Hypocriſy and Diſſembling; and let me never ſpeak in Defence of what is unjuſt or falſe; far be it from me, to join in ſtifling or oppoſing the Truth; let me never ridicule or expoſe to Scorn, the Ways or Sayings of ſuch as are virtuous; becauſe I know, all theſe are ſo many Ways of joining with the Devil, and becoming inſtrumental with him, to the Ruin of my own Soul, and of others.

Grant again, moſt merciful Lord, that I may never flatter any in their Weakneſſes or Paſſion: I am in frequent Occaſions of this Sin, whilſt Friendſhip inclines me to it: Intereſt and Dependance often ſtrongly preſs it, and the Authority of thoſe, I converſe with, ſeems to expect it from me. Theſe, and many other Arguments, perſuade me to ſpeak in Favour of what, in my own Conſcience,

ſcience. I judge moſt unreaſonable, and in Words to approve, what I condemn in my Heart. And how great, O God, is the Guilt I have contracted by this mean and unworthy Compliance, thro' Fear or Flattery! How many of my Neighbours Sins have I to anſwer for, by the Encouragement I have given, where my Duty to Thee, my God, obliged me to expreſs my Diſlike?

Ah, my God, what can I do here, but humble myſelf before Thee, under the Guilt of theſe my numberleſs, and I fear unknown Sins! Forgive me, I beſeech Thee, and all thoſe who have been encouraged by me in what was ſinful. And now let thy Grace ſo ſtrengthen me againſt all this Weakneſs, that I may never more be prevailed on, by any worldly Motives, to plead for what is unreaſonable or unjuſt; but let me be Advocate only for Truth; and may this, O God, ever take Place. I know, by this Method, I ſhall loſe the Favour of all ſuch as expect to be flattered, even when they are in the wrong; and ſhall be variouſly cenſured by others. But let it be ſo: It is much better for me to loſe ſuch Friends, than, for their Friendſhip, to approve all they do that is unreaſonable, and to concur in the Guilt of their Paſſions. Whatever I loſe, upon this Account, is for the Sake of Juſtice and Truth. And I have Reaſon rather to deſire than fear ſuch a Loſs, ſince Thou, O God, haſt promiſed eternal Bleſſings to thoſe that ſuffer for Juſtice Sake.

Grant

Grant then, moſt gracious Lord, that this may be my conſtant Rule, for the Time to come; that I may never ſpeak in Favour of any Cauſe, but where, according to the beſt of my Judgment, I believe it to be good and juſt. Let Flattery no more be my Sin: Let me ever hate it, as treacherous, and be aſhamed of it, as baſe and mean. For it is Treachery to encourage Evil, as if it were Good. And what is a greater Argument of a mean Spirit, than to renounce what is right and juſt, and ſubſcribe to the Paſſions and Extravagancies of every Company? I am not taught thus by Thee, O God: For this is certainly a very great Weakneſs, thus to act againſt my Judgment and Conſcience. But ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and, by thy powerful Aſſiſtance, help me in ſtanding againſt it. Behold, I lay before Thee both my Sins and my Deſires of Amendment. Forgive my paſt Sins, I beſeech Thee, and by thy Grace ſo confirm my Deſires, that I may never ceaſe from my Prayers and Endeavours, till I have a better Command of my Tongue, and have overcome all its ill Habits.

But, above all, have Regard, O God, to the Petition I now make to Thee, and grant, that I may never offend Thee, by Backbiting, Reviling, Detraction, or ſpeaking Evil of my Neighbour. I am often in the Occaſion of this Sin, both from my own corrupt Inclination; from converſing with others; and from the Diſlike of thoſe, who are

are either diſagreeable to me, or I apprehend to be in another Intereſt. And great Encouragement I have from the general Practice, not only of Chriſtians, but even of thoſe amongſt them, who are the moſt exemplar.

But ſtill I know, all theſe are nothing but Temptations, and can be no Warrant for doing what is ſinful. And therefore, I beſeech Thee, as my God and Protector, ſo to ſtrengthen me by thy holy Grace, that I may be a faithful Obſerver of thy Law, and may permit no Cuſtom, Authority, or Practice, to carry me againſt it. And particularly in the Caſe of Detraction, which I know to be ſo diſpleaſing to thee, and ſo very injurious to my own Soul.

Preſerve me, therefore, O God, from all malicious Reflections, that I may never be prevailed on by Revenge, Paſſion, Animoſity, or Ill-will, to publiſh or ſpeak any Thing that can take away or leſſen the Reputation of my Neighbour. For all, that is from theſe evil Roots, is ſo much againſt Charity, and ſo expreſsly forbidden by the Goſpel, that I cannot expect any Bleſſing or Grace from Heaven, nor even be in the Way to Happineſs, as long as I follow ſuch evil Suggeſtions, and lie under the Guilt of ſuch Crimes.

Let thy Grace therefore, O God, ſo rule in my Heart, that I may baniſh thence all malicious and revengeful Inclinations, and never ſpeak one Word in compliance with them: And if, at any Time, I am ſupriz'd with Paſſion, yet ſtill, O Lord, let thy Grace govern my

my Tongue, that I break not forth into any uncharitable Diſcourſe, but ſtifle all ſuch Motions under the ſtricteſt Silence. Be favourable to me, I beſeech Thee, in this Petition, becauſe I know my Weakneſs; I know how forward I am in ſpeaking, how ready to put the worſt Conſtruction on every Thing, when there is any Bitterneſs, Envy, or Diſlike at the Root; and how raſhly I am then apt to run out to my Neighbour's Diſadvantage. This is my Infirmity, and my only Help is in Thee, O God. Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, and, for the future, let both my Paſſions and my Words be under the Direction of thy Grace, that I offend not in either.

Inſtruct me likewiſe, O merciful Lord, in the Leſſon of true Charity, that I may be watchful in avoiding, not only malicious Reflections, but likewiſe all ſuch Diſcourſes as are not agreeable to that Love which I owe my Neighbour. The Love of my Neighbour is one of the greateſt Commandments, and my Salvation, I know, depends on the Obſervance of it. Grant therefore, O God, that, as often as I come into Company, I may ever have this Commandment as a Meaſure, ready both in my Heart and my Hand; and that to every Diſcourſe, that is moved, I may apply this Meaſure, and never join in any which I find not to ſquare with it. Hear me, O God of Mercy, in this Particular, that I may be careful in this Precept on which Thou haſt told me all depends.

Con-

Conſider then my Soul, and reflect what agrees with this Meaſure, *Thou art to love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* In all Kinds then of Diſcourſe, relating to thy Neighbour, imagine thyſelf in thy Neighbour's Place, and, ſuppoſing his Caſe thy own, reflect whether thou would'ſt be pleaſed to have all that diſcourſed of thee behind thy Back, which is ſaid of thy Neighbour? If thou could'ſt not willingly conſent to this, nor eſteem thoſe to be thy Friends, who ſhould do it; join not then in carrying on ſuch a Subject; for it ſquares not with thy Meaſures, which is, *To love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.*

O God, thus I ought to do, and thus careful I ought to be, in the Choice of my Diſcourſe. But how far am I from doing thus, who ſeldom conſider this nice Matter; but freely entertain my Friends with ſuch Diſcourſe of my Neighbour, as harmleſs, which, if others ſhould make of me, I ſhould not bear it with Patience? Ah, my God, I confeſs in this I am very inconſiderate and partial; and the Root of this is a Want of Charity; for, if my Heart were poſſeſſed with the true Love of my Neighbour, I ſhould then be as nice in my Neighbour's Reputation, as my own. Grant me therefore, O God, this Charity; grant me this Love of my Neighbour; let this keep Guard upon my Tongue, that no Word paſs out of my Lips, which I could not, with Content, hear of myſelf.

But conſider then, what thou could'ſt with Patience hear of thyſelf. Would it be eaſy to Thee, to hear others put the worſt Conſtruction on thy Words or Actions: To be poſitive in determining thy Intentions, to the leſs favourable Senſe: To relate to others what thou haſt ſpoken raſhly, or done indiſcreetly: To entertain themſelves with thy paſt Extravagancies; to recite ſuch Paſſages of thy Life, which thou canſt not think of without Confuſion, and deſireſt, that they ſhould lie buried in Silence? I muſt acknowledge all theſe Subjects would be a Trouble to me: I ſhould think thoſe Perſons had no Love or Charity for me, who helped to carry on ſuch Diſcourſe: I ſhould judge they offended God in ſo doing.

Thus I judge when the Caſe is my own; nay, and when any others are concerned, for whom I have a real Love and Eſteem. For of theſe, I cannot bear ſuch Diſcourſe. And natural Reaſon informs all ſo unanimouſly in this Matter, that none, who have any Degree of common Civility, will move or have Part in ſuch Diſcourſe, when they obſerve any preſent, whom they know to be real Friends to the Perſons who are the Subject of ſuch Entertainment. Thus, I confeſs it is, when the Caſe is my own, or of my Friends.

But how very different is the Caſe, in regard of thoſe, for whom I have no particular Concern, either of Nature or Intereſt? Of theſe I ſpeak at large, without any ſuch Check: And tho' Charity lays the ſame

ſame Reſtraints, as Friendſhip does, yet how very little do I regard it? O God, what can I ſay of myſelf in this Particular; but acknowledge my Fault, and confeſs, that Charity does not rule in my Heart; that tho' it be the greateſt of all Precepts, yet I have no Care to obſerve it! O bleſſed God, renew in my Soul a right Spirit: Infuſe into my Heart the Spirit of Charity; let this be more powerful with me, than Nature or Friendſhip, and impoſe an eternal Silence upon my Lips, as to whatever is a Tranſgreſſion of this great Commandment.

Grant me, O God, a better Spirit, than to delight in Corruption: Give me a more Chriſtian Temper, than to take Pleaſure in keeping open my Neighbours Wounds: Grant me more generous Inclinations, than to be always raking in the Mire: And no more, O God, let it be the Satisfaction of my leiſure Hours, to revive the Misfortunes or Follies of my Neighbours: For, if I loved them, their Misfortunes would certainly be the Subject of my Grief; and therefore, as long as I find Satisfaction, either in hearing or ſpeaking of them, it is as evident, as Demonſtration, that I do not truly love them. And how unhappy then muſt the State of my Soul be, if thy holy Grace be not the Remedy of my Unhappineſs?

Be merciful therefore, O God, to me a Sinner, and correct this Diſorder of my Soul, this ſinful Habit of my Tongue, that I may no more offend, by ſpeaking Evil of my

Neighbour; that I may be as tender of his good Name, as of my own. For, whilſt this Sin of Detraction is a Breach of Charity, where can my Comfort be, if, by the Help of thy Grace, I do not overcome it? Strengthen me therefore, I beſeech Thee, and refuſe not the Petition of a poor Sinner, who, ſenſible of his great Weakneſs, ſeeks to Thee for Help, and confeſſes there is no Help but from Thee. Suffer not the Work of thy Hands to periſh, but manifeſt now thy Power in me, that, in the Change of my Soul, I may experience that Thou art my God. Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may be watchful over all my Words, that I may no more make that my Entertainment, which is ſo very provoking, and may be the Damnation of my Soul.

Forgive me, O God of Mercy, whatever Sins I have cammitted of this Kind: All the Sins whereby I have, either deſignedly or indiſcreetly, blemiſhed my Neighbour's Reputation, or have been the Occaſion of his being leſs eſteemed among his Acquaintance. I am ſincerely troubled within myſelf, for having thus offended againſt Charity, and wiſh, with all my Soul, it were in my Power to make Reparation for whatever Injury I have done any Neighbour, by the Words I have ſpoken to his Prejudice. But, O God, how deſperate muſt my Condition be, if no Pardon is to be expected, except I make Reſtitution for the Wrong? For how ſhall I do this, when it is impoſſible to recal what is ſpread amongſt many?

many? I wiſh it were in my Power, I would willingly do it; and I will now do whatever Charity and Prudence can adviſe me to undertake.

This Deſire of my Heart, I hope Thou wilt accept, O God, and mercifully ſupply whatever is not in my Power to do. To thee, therefore, I recommend all thoſe, whom I have at any Time injured by my Words; and I beſeech Thee, in the Abundance of heavenly Bleſſings, to recompence the Wrong I have done. For ſince Juſtice obliges me to Reſtitution, I think myſelf bound to do by others, what I cannot do by myſelf; and, upon this Title of Juſtice, I now undertake to pray for them, and intend, for the Time to come, not to fail in begging thy Bleſſings upon them.

And now, for the future, give me Grace never more to have any Part in theſe Sins of Detraction, not only by never ſpeaking againſt my Neighbour, but likewiſe by never giving Encouragement to others, either by aſking Queſtions, by Words or Smiles, to do it. For if I do this, I know my Guilt is the ſame as if I ſpoke myſelf. Grant alſo, O God, that I may never willingly give Ear to Detractors, or be pleaſed with their uncharitable Diſcourſe; for this again is a Concurrence in their Sin, and I moſt certainly deceive myſelf, if in theſe Circumſtances I pretend to be innocent.

Rather, O moſt gracious Lord, give me ſuch Reſolution and Strength of Mind, that

I may diſcourage all Kinds of Detraction, either by reproving it, or, otherwiſe, ſhewing my Diſlike of it; and where this cannot be, that I may chuſe to withdraw from ſuch Company, rather than ſtay to be Witneſs of their Sin, who divert themſelves by being uncharitable to their Neighbours, and offending Thee. I am ſenſible this may not pleaſe; but how ſhall I be faithful in thy Service, O God, if, in all Things, I endeavour to pleaſe Men? O bleſſed God, deliver me from all ſuch baſe Compliance, which conſiders Men more than Thee, my God.

O God, who didſt promiſe to thy Servant *Moſes*, to be in his Mouth, and to teach him what to ſpeak; mercifully grant this Favour to me, thy Servant, that, whereas I am many Ways ſubject to offend in Words, my Tongue, for the future, may be under the Direction of thy Grace; that I may never open my Mouth againſt Charity, Truth, or Juſtice, but ſpeak in all Things as one taught by Thee.

O God, who haſt declared thy Hatred againſt lying Lips, againſt backbiting and whiſpering; mercifully deliver me from theſe Sins; may thy holy Grace keep my Mind ever watchful againſt them; and, ſince I make Profeſſion of being thy Servant, ſuffer me not, I beſeech Thee, ſo to forget what I profeſs, as to make a Cuſtom of, or pleaſe myſelf in ſuch Things, which Thou haſt declared ſo diſpleaſing to Thee. Ah, my God, what a Servant am I, if I have no more

more Reſpect to thy holy Will, than to make a Practice of offending Thee.

O God, who, by touching the Lips of *Iſaiah* the Prophet, with a Coal from the Altar, didſt cleanſe him from Sin, and purify him from all his Iniquity: Look upon me thy Servant, with the Eye of Compaſſion; and ſince thou ſeeſt me unhappily ſubject to many Sins, ſo as to have truly polluted Lips, wherewith I have often offended Thee, my God, and injured my Neighbour, let now thy Goodneſs be my Remedy: touch my Lips, I beſeech Thee, with a Coal from thy Altar, and let my Tongue be ſo purified, that it may become a Sacrifice to Thee. May nothing ſinful any more be heard from my Mouth, but Charity and Truth ſo dwell upon my Lips, that I may ſpeak nothing, but what is as a ſweet Savour in thy Sight.

O God, who didſt inſpire thy Prophets with a divine Spirit, ſo that, being of themſelves ſubject to many Weakneſſes, they were by this directed into Truth, and taught to ſpeak of their Neighbours Failings as Charity ſuggeſted, in order to reclaim them: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that my Tongue may be under the Influence of the ſame holy Mover, and by his divine Power be reſtrained from all Kinds of Untruths: May all Inclinations to Lying be checked by him, and no Word go out of my Mouth, which has not a Paſs from him. May I pray for all Sinners, and recommend them to thy Mercy: But of their

Sins, may I be ever ſilent, except where Charity obliges me to ſpeak.

O bleſſed Jeſus, the eternal Word of the Father, and infinite unerring Truth; communicate thyſelf to me, tho' an unworthy Member of that myſtical Body, of which Thou art the Head: Be Thou a Model to me, and let the Virtue of the Head, deſcending upon me, give me both Life and Motion. Eſpecially, O Jeſus, let my Tongue be ſubject to this divine Power: Let all my Words and Diſcourſe be regulated by it, ſo as no more to offend againſt Charity, Juſtice, and Truth; and thus may I give Proof of the Old Man being put off, and the New abiding in me.

O Jeſus, who didſt ſo reſtore the dumb Man to his Speech, that he ſpoke aright: Mercifully vouchſafe to work this Miracle in me, that after ſo often offending Thee in Words, I may now learn to ſpeak aright: O Jeſus, what an ill Uſe have I made of my Tongue? Had not I better have been dumb, than thus frequently ſinned againſt Thee? Ah, my God, how long ſhall I go on thus, raſh, fooliſh, and unchriſtian! Shew now thy Power in this unhappy Sinner, and deliver me from all my wonted Weakneſs, teach me to govern my Tongue; teach me when to be ſilent, and how to ſpeak aright.

O Jeſus, who, knowing our Weakneſs, haſt given us Directions, as to our Speech, and mercifully foretold us; that every idle Word ſhall fall under Judgment: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may be ever mindful both of thy Directions and Threats, and that,

that, being awed by theſe, I may keep my Lips under the ſtricteſt Guard, ſo as to avoid all thoſe Words which are diſpleaſing to Thee, and for which I am to be called to an Account. Muſt I give an Account of idle Words? What then will be the Judgment of lying, flattering, malicious and uncharitable Diſcourſe! O Jeſus, let thy Mercy and Paſſion plead for me with thy eternal Father, that I may obtain Forgiveneſs of what is paſt, and be ſtrengthened with new Grace, for effectually renouncing all my former Sins. For if I make that my daily Practice, which will increaſe the Severity of thy Judgment, how ſhall I appear before Thee?

O Jeſus, who, by thy Apoſtle, has commanded thy Followers to lay aſide all evil Speaking; to be careful that no ill Word comes out of their Mouth; and haſt given no Hopes of Life or good Days, but upon Condition of bridling the Tongue from Evil: Vouchſafe me, I beſeech Thee, ſuch Strength of Grace, that I may obſerve thy Commands, and perform the Conditions Thou propoſeſt. I confeſs I have no Hopes but in Thee, and that all my Hopes are vain, if I am careleſs in what Thou preſcribeſt. See then, my Soul, has not thy Lord forbidden all evil Speaking? And what doſt Thou think of all thy daily Sins in Words? He has forbidden them, and thou unthinkingly goeſt on with them. O Jeſus, give me thy Grace, that I may better anſwer my Character, and have more grounded Hopes for thy Mercy.

O Jeſus, to whom is known all my Weakneſs, and the many Ways by which I offend in Word, both againſt God and my Neighbour; ſhew Mercy to me, thy Servant; for, behold I now lay my Sins before Thee; it is a Confuſion to me, to ſee how eaſily I fall into them; and how that, after ſo frequent an Acknowledgment of my Infirmity, I ſtill lie under it, as if I ſaw it not, or did not believe it an Unhappineſs. O Jeſus, have Compaſſion on me, and help me; help me in being more watchful and reſolute againſt all my evil Cuſtoms; for while I complain of my Sins, and take ſo little Care to avoid them, it is too plain, I am not in Earneſt, and that my Complaints are only a Confeſſion of my Guilt, but without Repentance. This ſhews how much I want of thy Grace: Help me therefore, O bleſſed Redeemer, according to my Want, and now let thy Grace keep my Tongue in Subjection to thy Law. Thou haſt informed me by thy Apoſtle, that *He, who thinks himſelf religious, and bridles not his Tongue, his Religion is vain.* If then an ungoverned Tongue makes void all Religion, how miſerable, how wretched am I, who am yet ſo much wanting in ſo important a Point? Ah, my God! ſuffer me not any longer to go on thus; my Caſe deſerves Compaſſion. And does it not, O Sinner, demand thy Care too? Endeavour then to be more watchful; ſet a better Guard upon thy Lips; let not thy Tongue have its uſual Liberty; ſpeak not all

that

that comes to thy Mind: Let thy Thoughts be examined by Prudence, and by Charity, and by Truth, and by the Will of God; and, till they have paſſed this Examination, let them not be made publick. Let not Paſſion, Humour, or Inconſiderateneſs, govern that Member, on which Life depends. O Jeſus, grant, that, for the future, I may be thus careful, and then I need not doubt of thy Aſſiſtance; and thus alone can I expect an Amendment of thoſe many Sins, of Lying, Vanity, Flattery, and Detraction, by which I have hitherto ſo often offended Thee.

PATIENCE.

I COME this Day, to aſk of Thee, my God, the Virtue and divine Gift of Patience, which is ſo neceſſary, to carry me through the Troubles of this World, the Difficulties of my Charge, and to ſatisfy the many Duties which are enjoined me by thy Command. I confeſs to Thee my great Weakneſs in this Point; there being not any Day which does not convince me how much I want what I now come to aſk; and therefore I beg of Thee, my God, that Grace, that, according to my Neceſſity, ſo my Heart may be raiſed to Thee, and be ſo earneſt

earneſt in aſking, as to prevail for the Grant of what is the Subject of my preſent Petition.

O God, I beſeech Thee, turn with Compaſſion towards thy Servant, and conſider my Neceſſities. Thou knoweſt how often I offend Thee every Day by Impatience: Thou knoweſt how great a Hindrance this is to me, in all that belongs to my Soul; how it makes me unfit for every Duty; into how many Snares I am drawn by it; how many raſh and unreaſonable Things I both ſay and do by its Suggeſtion; and how many Scandals I give, thro' my Paſſion; theſe are ſome of the ill Effects of my Impatience, tho' I fear I ſee not the Half Part of them; but they are all known to Thee, my God; and therefore Thou knoweſt my Neceſſities to be ſuch as deſerve Compaſſion; ſuch as, if not remedied, muſt draw me into thy greater Diſpleaſure, and be the daily Occaſion of encreaſing the Number of my Sins againſt Thee.

Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God of Mercy; and, ſince Thou haſt been pleaſed to give me ſome Senſe of my Weakneſs, give me likewiſe Grace to overcome it: I know, however weak I am, yet thy Grace is ſufficient for me, and that, if Thou doeſt but ſay the Word, my Soul ſhall be healed. Speak therefore to my Soul, O Lord, and command new Strength and Steadineſs to be communicated to it, that I may not ſo eaſily be moved, ſo eaſily fall into Diſturbance, and loſe both my Reaſon and my Peace. Give me Grace, at leaſt,

leaſt, that, while I complain of this my Miſfortune, I may in earneſt ſtrive againſt it, and labour by my beſt Endeavours, to prevent all its uſual ill Effects returning upon me.

I confeſs Thou haſt furniſhed me with Motives ſufficient for obliging me to be very ſolicitous in this Affair, and not to omit any Thing I can do, for bringing myſelf to a better Temper. For while I believe and acknowledge, there is nothing does or can happen to me, but by thy Appointment or Permiſſion, and whatever Part any Creatures have in my Trouble, that they are no more than Inſtruments in thy Hand, and all act, as ſubordinate to Thee, the ſupreme and ſovereign Governor of the Univerſe; this obliges me to a peaceable Submiſſion; ſince I am bound to confeſs, that whatever comes from thy Hand is moſt juſt, moſt holy, and moſt adorable, and that it is the indiſpenſable Duty and only Wiſdom of ſuch poor Creatures as I am, to bow down under thy Orders, and with Chearfulneſs own, that as it is their Happineſs to be under thy Care, ſo it ought to be their daily Comfort; that nothing can be better for them, than what is the Effect of that infinite Wiſdom and all-ſeeing Providence, with which Thou governeſt.

Thus it ought to be with me, O God; and yet as often as Trouble falls upon me, how do I forget all this, and open my Breaſt to Diſquiets, as if I were no Part of thy Care, or Thou hadſt no Concern in what happens to me? O bleſſed God, ſuffer not

not, I beſeech Thee, my Faith to be ſo eaſily oppreſſed by Trifles; but grant that the Belief of thy Providence, and of my Subjection to Thee, may keep my Soul in a laſting Peace; grant that I may always approve and think that beſt for me which Thou appointeſt; and that the Shame of a Creature uneaſy, and excepting rebelliouſly againſt the Orders of infinite Wiſdom, and his God, may ſtifle in me all Inclinations to Diſquiet, and preſerve me at all Times in the Calm of a peaceable Submiſſion.

I know again, that nothing of Trouble can happen to me, but ſtill more than this is due to my Sins; and that if I were to ſuffer, as my Sins deſerve, I ſhould rejoice in that as a great Mercy, which now is made the Occaſion of my Complaints. Grant therefore, O God, that whatever happens uneaſy or afflicting to me, and, from whatever Hand it comes, I may conſider it as the Puniſhment due to my Offences, and accept it as the Penance enjoined me by thy Juſtice: Thus, O God, as often as any Thing afflicts me, let it be my conſtant Practice to lift up my Eyes and Heart immediately to Heaven, and look upon it as the Execution of that Sentence which Thou haſt pronounced againſt me, in Puniſhment of my Iniquities: And, upon this, let it be my Practice again, to bow down with all Humility, and ſay, *Thou art juſt, Lord, in all thy Ways: It is juſt the Offender ſhould be puniſhed: Submit therefore to the Sentence of thy Lord, and complain not; for it is all from thy own Sins.*

O

O God, what an Advantage might I make of all my Troubles, could I thus ſubmit to them as to the Puniſhment my Sins deſerve! And how great a Loſer am I now, whilſt, by my Impatience, I offend, and make new Additions to my Sins? This is great Indiſcretion, and vile ill Management, to be there a Loſer, when I have in my Hands the Opportunity of ſo great a Gain. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, moſt gracious Lord, that the Memory of my paſt Sins, and the great Hazard of Eternity, may make me deſirous of finding Means for cancelling this Debt, and being again reconciled to thy Favour; and for this End, that I may be willing to embrace all Occaſions of Suffering, and labour to ſuffer with Patience, ſince there is nothing can be more effectual for making my Peace with Thee.

I know likewiſe, that Thou art pleaſed, O God, to exerciſe thy beſt Servants with many Trials; and that ſo Thou haſt ordered it, the Way to Heaven is thro' many Tribulations: Thus is their Fidelity tried; thus are they improved in Humility and Patience; brought to a greater Contempt of the World, and raiſed to a more earneſt Deſire of Heaven. Now, if this good Uſe of Troubles be ſuch an effectual Help towards Heaven, have not I in this a great Motive to be patient under them? For, who is there ſolicitous to go to any Place, that grieves at a fair Opportunity, which offers, for being helped forward in his Way? Or who, earneſtly deſiring any Thing, does not lay

lay hold, with Satisfaction, on whatever happens that may be very helpful in obtaining what is desired? And, is not Heaven the Place I pretend to? Is not the Possession of God what I most earnestly desire to obtain? And, what then art thou to do, my Soul, when Troubles happen to thee? Dost not thou see, that to bear them with Submission, Humility, and Patience, is the most certain Way to the Possession of Heaven and thy God; and that it is the Path trodden by those vast Numbers who are now in Bliss? What is it then to grieve and be impatient under them, but to contradict all thy Pretensions to a future State? It is to think thyself unhappy, for being put in the Way to the Place where, thou sayest, thy Desire is to be. And, is not this to act both against Reason and Faith? Consider it then, and, for the future, endeavour to do more like a Christian. If thou hast any Interest in Heaven, and desirest to be there, do not think thyself injured when thou art put in the Way to it: And, when thou hast fair Opportunities for advancing strongly forward, make the best Use of them, with the Direction and Comfort of Faith; and do not play the Infidel, or Mad-man, in turning them all against thyself, so as to set thee backward, or put thee quite out of the Way.

Thus I can reason, but it is Thou, O God, must help me in the Practice. Thou seest how little a Thing casts me down, and so darkens my clearest Reasoning, that, being under

under any Trouble, I diſcern nothing of that Way which at other Times lies ſo plain before me. Let it be therefore the Effect of thy holy Grace to ſupport my Soul in Time of Trouble, that I yield not then to Impatience, to Vexation, Melancholy or Paſſion; but that, aſſiſted by thy heavenly Light, I may conſider what is the beſt Uſe I can make of my Affliction, and how to turn it to the Service of Eternity. Let it be then my Endeavour to humble myſelf under thy Hand, ſince I ſtand ſo much in need of being humbled; and I know there is nothing can more recommend me to thy Favour, than Humility. Let me then reflect upon the great Advantage thy Servants have made of their Afflictions, and how, by Patience and Reſignations, they have encreaſed the Glory of their Crowns; and, by the ſame Methods, may I labour to ſecure my own Eternity.

I know again, that Chriſt, my Redeemer, being true God, and, having all Things in his Power, choſe the Way of the Croſs, even ſo far, that his whole Life was a Croſs and Martyrdom, and, after all Kinds of Afflictions, he at length died a Sacrifice under all the Violence of Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Contempt. I know he calls all his Followers to take up their Croſs and follow him. I know he appointed his Apoſtles to very ſevere Suffering, and choſe other his moſt faithful Servants to the Fellowſhip of the Croſs. I know he foretold Trials and Perſecutions to his Followers; that they ſhould mourn here,

here, while the World rejoiced, and promiſed the Bleſſing of eternal Happineſs ſhould be the Fruit of their Suffering.

And, is not this enough to preſerve Peace in my Soul, when Affliction comes, and I find the Croſs on my Shoulders? Though it be uneaſy to Nature to go under the Weight; yet, what greater Comfort for a Chriſtian, than thus to be aſſociated to Chriſt, his Redeemer; to his Apoſtles and Martyrs; and to be in the Way to that Glory which is promiſed to thoſe who take Part in bearing the Croſs? There is certainly Matter enough for Comfort, to ſuch as know their great Buſineſs in this World is to ſecure the next: For, though theſe have many Things to deſire in this World, yet their great Concern, above all others, is to be in the ſafeſt Way to eternal Reſt. Hence they find more Satisfaction under the Weight of their Croſs, than in all the Charms of a worldly Peace; becauſe, being raiſed by Faith above Nature, they judge not of Things by Senſe, or by any Agreeableneſs to their preſent State; but by the Advantage they have, with regard to Eternity.

O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may find my Faith thus active in me, as often as I fall under any Trouble. May I then ſubmit to it, as to a Part of my Redeemer's Croſs, which he has commanded me to take up and follow him. For, I know, in whatever Thou ordereſt or permitteſt, there is a Manifeſtation of thy Will, ſuch as to me is equal to thy Command. Let me, therefore, in every Trouble,

Trouble, conſider my Saviour's Croſs, and look upon myſelf commanded by Thee to take it up. Suffer me not to throw it off my Shoulders by any Impatience, but to go on under it in the Spirit of my bleſſed Redeemer; in the Spirit of Obedience, in the Spirit of Humility, and entire Submiſſion to thy holy Will. Let me then find Comfort in being united to him, and, being taken into the Fellowſhip of the Croſs; and, without conſidering Nature, let me reſolve to make that my Joy, which is the Ordinance of thy Will, is ſanctified in Chriſt, and raiſes ſuch poor Worms, as I am, to the Participation of his Glory.

Having ſo many Motives to accept and bear with Patience whatever Troubles come to my Portion in this Life, I make it my earneſt Petition to Thee, that the due Conſideration of them may give a Check to all my inward Diſturbances, and, through thy Grace, be a Means to prevent my falling into any ſinful Impatience. And, in the firſt Place, I beſeech Thee, O God, I may never more fall into Paſſion; but that, by thy Bleſſing upon my good Endeavours, I may come to that Temper, as to command all Motions that incline me to Anger. I am ſenſible how great a Blemiſh this Evil is to me, ſince it betrays a more than ordinary Weakneſs to be ſo eaſily diſturbed; and ſhews my Reaſon not to be ſolid, which is alarmed upon Trifles, and ſo often loſes itſelf; beſides the much greater Miſchiefs, in being injurious to all my ſpiri-

ſpiritual Concerns: Wherefore I beſeech thy infinite Goodneſs, to calm all this Diſturbance in me, and to give me ſuch a Chriſtian Spirit, that I may bear all Kinds of Evils with Patience, and endeavour to remedy them with Moderation.

Another Petition I make to Thee, O God, that, by thy Grace, I may overcome all that Fretfulneſs and inward Uneaſineſs to which I am ſubject. I eaſily perceive all this proceeds from a Want of Patience, a Want of Humility, or Meekneſs and Submiſſion; and, this being a Want of that Spirit, which the Goſpel preſcribes, and belongs to my Profeſſion. I cannot but be aſhamed within myſelf, to ſee, how little I have of that Character, which I profeſs: Wherefore, O God, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, to change this my unhappy Temper, and aſſiſt me every Day with thy Grace, that I may labour in overcoming myſelf, and maſtering this ill Cuſtom to which I am ſubject. Give me Strength to deny myſelf, and to ſtand againſt all Inclinations to Diſturbance, as againſt Temptations which lead me out of the Way of the Goſpel. Give me Grace then to calm all my Uneaſineſs, by calling to Mind the Rules of my Profeſſion, and by forcing Nature to bend to them, and let me never deſiſt from my Endeavours, till I have obtained ſo far upon myſelf, as to find that I can ſit enjoying the Comforts of inward Peace, under ſuch Provocations as hitherto have been enough to put me into Diſorder.

My

My Neceſſities, O God, oblige me ſtill again to renew my Petitions to Thee, and that is, That Thou wouldeſt vouchſafe to confirm my Mind with ſuch Patience, that I be not eaſily provoked by the Words or Actions of my Neighbours. In this I find a great Weakneſs; ſo that, while I ſeem to be in the greateſt Peace, a croſs Word, an ordinary Contradiction, Ill-humour, or the leaſt Sign of Contempt, is enough to raiſe a Storm, and change all my Peace into Confuſion. This, O God, I confeſs, is a great Fault, being contrary to all the Rules of the Goſpel; to its Charity, to its Humility, to its Meekneſs, to its Patience, and to its Peace. And, when I conſider it, I cannot but be troubled to ſee how unlike I am in this to my bleſſed Redeemer, who, having taught me by his Example, to bear the greateſt Contradictions in a ſilent Patience, I have not yet learned to bear the leaſt without Impatience, and too often Clamour.

How long, O God, how long ſhall I thus go on, pretending to be Chriſt's Diſciple, and practiſing ſo little of what he teaches! Help me, I beſeech Thee, under this Weakneſs, and teach me by thy Grace, to live more by the Spirit of the Goſpel. Help me to ſuppreſs all Anger, give me Strength to overcome it; and, if at any Time I am ſurprized by it, then, O merciful God, ſhew thy Goodneſs to thy Servant, and teach me to govern my Lips, that I expreſs no Paſſion

ſion in Words, nor give any Diſturbance. I know it is my Duty to be ready to ſuffer all Extremities, and even Death itſelf, rather than offend Thee; but, how little am I prepared for this, who cannot bear the leaſt Provocation without Reſentment and Paſſion, and have not Patience for the moſt common Trials!

Help me, O God, under this Infirmity, and convince my Soul, how unbecoming and infamous all Impatience is to a Profeſſor of the Goſpel; and what Glory there is in Suffering with Patience. Let this Impreſſion ſink deep into my Soul, and be ſo accompanied with thy Grace, that, for the future, I may never be diſturb'd at any Provocations, but rather find Comfort in them; ſince it is not the Suffering, but only the Impatience under them can do me Harm. O my Soul, when wilt thou come to underſtand this Leſſon, and ſee where thy Intereſt lies? Thou often complaineſt of thy Neighbours, as if they were injurious to Thee; when it is not they, but thou doſt thyſelf the Harm. They furniſh thee with Matter of Victory, and thou wouldeſt certainly triumph in Preſence of thy God, did'ſt thou but manage it with Diſcretion; but, for want of this, thou ſheweſt a mean Spirit, and, like a Slave, art baſely overcome; and then complaineſt of them, when the whole Fault in this is not theirs, but thine. Ah, my God, I own the Fault is mine,

mine, and now, like an humble Slave, caſt myſelf proſtrate before Thee, confeſſing my Weakneſs, and that all my Dependance is on Thee. I have been many Years this unhappy Slave, and, knowing there is no Power but thine can reſcue me from this Subjection, I earneſtly implore thy Help.

Have Compaſſion therefore on me, and grant me that true Diſcretion, that, for the future, under all Kinds of Provocations, I may manage ſo as not to be injurious to myſelf, nor be a Loſer by them. For this End, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, to preſerve me, in all ſuch Occaſions, from ſudden Paſſion and Impatience; and give me Grace to check theſe Motions, if they begin to diſturb my Breaſt. Then, O God, let me be afraid of myſelf more than of what others have ſaid or done to me. Let this Fear put a Guard upon my Lips; and, in Silence, let all my Thoughts be taken up, in conſidering the great *Advantage* of patient Suffering, the *Command* of forgiving Injuries, and the *Bleſſing* of returning Good for Evil. Under this Conſideration, I beg of Thee, O God, to make me fearful of loſing the preſent Opportunity, and deſirous of gaining thy Favour, in the preſent Occaſion, that is offered: With this Deſire, let a ſteady Compoſure of Mind ſucceed; and thus may I ſtand under all Provocations, rejoicing,

joicing, and even triumphing within myſelf, while, in the Eye of the World, I ſeem to ſuffer and lie under Reproach.

I am very ſenſible, O God, how much better and wiſer this would be, than to go on in my uſual Weakneſs, of betraying my Impatience, of taking nothing quietly, of breaking forth into Paſſion, of filling all with Diſſention, Noiſe, and Diſturbance; and then to have a ſecond Fretting, when, upon cooling, I reflect how fooliſh I have been in loſing my Peace, and acting like an Unbeliever, and not as a Chriſtian. This now I am ſenſible of, but it is Thou, O God, who muſt help me in the Practice; ſhew then thy Mercy to me, and ſtrengthen me with ſuch Grace, that I may no more be ſurprized and blinded with the Heat of Paſſion, but rather bear all Things with Patience, and learn in this one Point, to be wiſe, where it turns to ſo good an Account, and I have ſo frequent Occaſions for it.

§ II.

I have ſtill another Petition to addreſs to Thee, O God, for the Remedy of another Weakneſs; and it is, that I may be patient under Reproofs, and not fall into Paſſion or Diſcouragement, when I am reprehended. In this Particular I have great Complaints to make againſt myſelf, becauſe I ſee, how little and inconſiderable a Word is enough to dsſturb all my Quiet, and put me into

into great Diſorder; ſo that I ſeldom fail either of fretting like an Unbeliever, or of being quite dejected in Mind; as if, upon a Reproof, there was no Place left for Comfort. And what muſt be at the Root of this but ſome intolerable Pride, which cannot bear a Contradiction, or a ſtrange Impatience, which cannot ſubmit to any Trial?

This is an Unhappineſs which requires thy Help, O God, for my Cure; and it being attended with ſo many Inconveniencies, which are all known to Thee, it muſt neceſſarily move Thee to have Compaſſion on my Deſires. See then, O God, my Weakneſs; and it being ſuch, in which I have no Delight, but is much more the Occaſion of my Trouble, ſhew thyſelf a God of Mercy to me, and help me. Infuſe into my Soul thy Grace, by which my Heart may be better eſtabliſhed than to be thus eaſily put into Diſorder. Teach me, I beſeech Thee, to be a Chriſtian, that I may learn to receive Contradictions with ſuch a Spirit as the Goſpel requires, that is, with Meekneſs and Patience; for, how am I a Follower of my Redeemer, if, upon ſuch ordinary Trials, I act quite contrary both to his Doctrine and Example! O God, Thou ſeeſt what an unhappy Temper this is, and what a Confuſion it muſt be to me to find that, after ſo many Reſolutions and Proteſtations of being faithful to Thee, I ſo eaſily forget all, and let every trifling Occaſion put me into that Diſturbance, as if Peace and Patience were not Things belonging to my Profeſſion.

Teach me, I beſeech Thee, to have a greater Value for theſe neceſſary Ingredients of a Chriſtian Life, and to be more ſolicitous in preſerving them. I am convinced enough of my Dependance on them; that, without them, I can perform no one Duty well, but fall into many Sins; and yet, O God, upon what little Occaſions do I loſe both my Peace and Patience! Ah, my Lord, when wilt Thou change this unhappy Maſs, and deliver me from this Weakneſs? When ſhall I begin to be the Soldier of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to ſtand my Ground in Time of Battle; to let Patience be my Defence, and to overcome by Suffering? This is what I am taught; this is what I profeſs; but, when is it I do thus? Help me, O merciful God, and give me the Patience which belongs to my Character; that, bearing all Contradiction, as Thou preſcribeſt, I may be in Hopes of that Crown which Thou haſt promiſed.

Another Weakneſs, O Lord, obliges me to make ſtill another Petition to Thee; and it is, That I may then have Patience when I apprehend myſelf affronted, expoſed to Reproach, Suſpicions, Shame, or falſe Accuſations. In theſe Caſes, I beſeech Thee, to grant me ſuch Conſtancy of Mind, that I be not diſordered with Paſſion, nor fall into any Dejection, nor diſquiet myſelf with vain Imaginations of what the World will ſay. Nature puſhes me on ſtrongly into theſe crooked Ways, and I find great Inclinations to take them, backed with Variety of preſſing Reaſons; but I ſee the Corruption of ſuch Ways, and the Vanity of all

thoſe Arguments which appear ſo plauſible. I ſee they are all in Favour of Impatience, of unjuſt Self-love and Pride; and therefore now moſt humbly ſolicit thy heavenly Majeſty for granting me ſuch Humility, ſuch Patience and Courage, that I may look upon theſe Exerciſes as Trifles, and learn to ſtand unconcerned amidſt them.

I am ſenſible it is very juſt it ſhould be ſo: For, when I look upon myſelf, and ſee how great a Sinner I am, I preſently perceive ſo much Unworthineſs, Ingratitude, and Folly in myſelf, that I cannot but own it is juſt I ſhould be deſpiſed, that I ſhould be had in Contempt, and that all ſhould have an ill Opinion of me. And why then, my Soul, doſt thou ſo much diſturb thyſelf, when thou art under theſe Trials? Thou haſt much more Reaſon to be pleaſed that Juſtice is done; that Self-love and Pride, thy greateſt Enemies, meet with this Contradiction, and are beaten down; that Humility is exerciſed; that thou haſt an Opportunity of ſuffering ſomething for thy Sins, and are put in the Way of the Croſs.

I own all this, O my God, and here confeſs, there is no Kind of Affront, Contempt, or Reproach ſo great, but I deſerve ſtill more; and therefore have no Reaſon to complain, but to rejoice whenever I am thus humbled, and am ſet in the Rank which I deſerve. But ſtill Thou ſeeſt how weak I am; and that inſtead of Joy, under theſe Provocations, I am filled with the Confuſion of a working and reſtleſs Pride, and can have no Peace with thoſe whom

Thou haſt employed or permitted to be the Miniſters of thy Juſtice, in humbling me, though much leſs than is my Due. This, unhappy Sinner, am I under the Government of Pride, while I pretend to ſerve and obey Thee, my God. But have Mercy on me, I beſeech Thee, and forgive this my Iniquity: For behold, I acknowledge here the Injuſtice of it, and ſee it ſo unreaſonable, that I wiſh with all my Heart, I might never more fall under its Guilt. Let not then thy Grace, O God, be wanting to me; but as I here own before Thee the Juſtice of whatever Contempts can fall upon me, ſo I beſeech Thee to ſtrengthen me under them; that even then I may reflect how juſt they are; that I may ſuppreſs all Paſſion and Diſquiet, give a Check to all Reſentments, ſtop all Enquiry after the Authors, charge nothing upon Malice, but all upon my own Sins; and in that Senſe of Juſtice ſit ſtill, rejoicing in being humbled, and praiſing thy holy Name, who art willing to receive ſuch a Sacrifice from me, an unworthy Sinner.

Beſides theſe Particulars, I beſeech Thee, O God, to remember me in all my Troubles, whether of Pain, Sickneſs, Loſſes, Misfortunes, Diſtreſſes, Oppreſſion, Death of Friends, or other difficult Circumſtances: Whatever of theſe come to my Portion, I earneſtly make it my Petition, that I may be aſſiſted by thy heavenly Grace, and by this divine Help be enabled to reſiſt Nature, and reſolutely ſtand againſt all Inclinations, either

to

to Paſſion, Melancholy, or Impatience. Teach me then to ſuffer like a Chriſtian, and permit me not to offend Thee by an Uneaſineſs, when I have greateſt Reaſon to engage thy Goodneſs to my Relief. For this End, I beg of Thee, O merciful Father, as often as I fall under any Affliction, that I may forthwith humble myſelf, under thy Hand, and by hearty Contrition ſeek to make my Peace with Thee; that ſo, if my Trouble be the Puniſhment of Sin, the Scourge may be thus removed; and, if it be deſigned for my Exerciſe, I may be prepared by thy Grace to bear it, and improve under it, according to the Deſign of thy Providence.

May I then raiſe up my Eyes and Heart to Thee, and, ſeeing all Things to be according to thy bleſſed Will, bow down under it, with an entire Surrender of my Will to thine. Upon this Submiſſion, give me Grace, O God, to diſſipate all uneaſy and murmuring Thoughts, to ſmother all Complaints, and to bear with Patience whatever Weight I cannot remove. Then, O God, let me have a full Sight of my own Unworthineſs, and learn from hence to adore thy Juſtice in the Puniſhment of a Sinner. Let me have a Proſpect of that Happineſs which Thou haſt promiſed to thoſe that mourn; and, upon the Terms of this Promiſe, bear every Affliction with Comfort. Then may I put myſelf wholly into thy Hands, to lead me through whatever Ways Thou pleaſeſt, to do with me as Thou thinkeſt good, to afflict me

or deliver me, to add ſtill more Weight to my Burthen, or give me Eaſe; placing my whole Satisfaction in this one Point, that Thou knoweſt what is beſt for me. In this Manner, O bleſſed God, may I bear all Troubles, and ſhew myſelf a Chriſtian in Affliction, as much as in Time of Peace; and ſo I may find the Benefit, and thy holy Name be glorified in all my Trials.

O God, who waſt pleaſed to exerciſe thy Servant *Job* with the Loſs of all his worldly Goods, of his Health, Children, and of whatever elſe was dear to him; ſo that, of the Happieſt, he became the moſt Miſerable of Men: And yet, amidſt thoſe rigorous Trials, didſt ſo ſupport him with thy heavenly Grace, that he bore all with Patience, and under all his Oppreſſion ſtill bleſſed thy holy Name: Grant, I beſeech Thee, I may be ſo aſſiſted by thy Grace under all Troubles, that, in whatever Way I ſuffer, it may be ſtill with the Patience of this thy Servant; grant, that, in the evil Day, I may be mindful of the manifold Bleſſings received from thy Hand; and that, having had theſe multiplied upon me, I may not think myſelf miſerable in their Loſs, for having been more happy than others. Rather, O God, as I rejoice in what Thou giveſt, ſo let me be content in what Thou takeſt away, and equally give Glory to thy Name in both.

O God, who having choſen *David* out of all *Iſrael*, and commanded him to be anointed, King

King over the People, didſt afterwards viſit him with the ſevereſt Trials, in being perſecuted as a Malefactor, by thoſe to whom he had done the greateſt Service; in the Want of Neceſſaries; in being forced from his Houſe; in being obliged to ſeek Shelter amongſt his Enemies, and expoſed to the greateſt Dangers; and didſt ſtill ſo ſupport his Soul, that he ſuffered all with a wonderful Patience; neither murmuring at his hard Fate, nor ſeeking Relief by any undue Means: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may learn, by his Example, to go through all Difficulties; and that, whenever Thou ſhalt viſit me with any Part of his Exerciſe, I may reſt with an entire Confidence in Thee; ever reſigned to thy bleſſed Will, and ſatisfied with whatever Portion thy Providence has appointed for me. Let thy Grace then direct me in all my Ways; that I yield not to the Inclinations of my own weak Nature, either in ſinking under my Burthen, or by any unwarrantable Means endeavouring my Deliverance; but that I wait with Patience upon the Orders of thy Providencee having this one Solicitude alone, of complying with thy holy Will, and following where Thou directeſt.

O God, who didſt often afflict thy People for their Sins, and upon turning to Thee in their Affliction, in the Humiliations of Faſting, Prayer, and Repentance, didſt often ſhew thyſelf their Deliverer: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, as often as I find thy

Hand upon me in any Affliction, I may immediately turn to Thee; and, in the Endeavours of a ſincere Repentance, be ſolicitous to ſeek thy Help. Suffer me not then unprofitably to grieve, or indiſcreetly to torment myſelf; for this, I know, is all going out of the Way, and waſting my Spirits in vain; but, giving a Check to theſe Inclinations, may my whole Care be to grieve and ſigh for my Sins. Thou haſt given me ſufficient Proof, how much this prevails for obtaining Relief? What therefore ſhould I do, when I am miſerable, but take the moſt effectual Way for Help: And where is this, but in Thee, O God?

O God, who haſt ſhewed us, in *Saul*, the ſad Effects of Impatience and Paſſion; ſince not bearing his Trouble with Submiſſion nor reſting on Thee, in the Day of Affliction, with that Confidence as he ought; we find an evil Spirit came upon him, and with Violence puſhed him on to the greaeſt Extravagancies; ſo that he had no Regard to Innocence, trampled upon Juſtice, and was not awed by the known Will of God: Mercifully give Ear to my Petition, and deliver me from all Paſſion and Impatience, for behold, I confeſs here, I am ſenſible of the ill Effects of them; how they blind our Reaſon, and darken our Faith, and lay open our Hearts ſo much to evil Spirits, that, under this Diſorder, we are in danger of all, that is unreaſonable and unjuſt. Wherefore I beſeech Thee, O God, to let thy Grace ſecure me againſt theſe Evils; that, under all Troubles or Provocations,

tions, I may be careful ſo to moderate both my Grief and Impatience, that they never uſurp upon my Reaſon, but be ever kept in Subjection to it. Grant, O moſt gracious Lord, this my Requeſt, becauſe inward Peace is the great Comfort of my Soul, and Reaſon and Faith are the only Lights which Thou haſt ordained for my Government. And how unhappy muſt I be, if the Tyranny of Grief or Paſſion deſtroy my Peace, and raiſe ſo much Confuſion, as to eclipſe the Lights which are to guide me! Have Mercy therefore on thy Servant, and give me that Command of all my Paſſions, that I may never more fall under this Unhappineſs, but by Patience may preſerve my Peace, and have the clear Guidance of thoſe Lights which Thou haſt given me.

O God, who waſt pleaſed to viſit thy Servant *Toby* with Blindneſs, even at a Time when all his Buſineſs was in the beſt Offices of Charity; and, in this Affliction, didſt give him ſuch Patience, as to bear it with an entire Submiſſion to thy holy Will, and to ſeek no other Comfort, but in Thee: Grant, O God, that with a like Patience I may go thro' all Troubles of this Life; and if I am brought into Difficulties or Diſtreſs, by doing Good to others, let not this be any Diſcouragement to me; but then, O God, ſo raiſe up my Soul, that I may have Comfort in ſubmitting to thy Will, and even rejoice in whatever I ſuffer in ſo good a Cauſe.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who didſt declare to thy Apoſtles, that they ſhould meet with great Oppoſition in their Labours; but that he, that perſevered to the End, ſhould be ſaved: Mercifully grant, that, as often as I meet with Oppoſition, I may bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apoſtles Portion, and make it my only Care to perſevere to the End, that ſo I may be ſaved.

O Jeſus, who didſt declare to thy Apoſtles, that they ſhould be hated by all Men; but that he, that perſevered to the End, ſhould be ſaved: Grant, that, as often as I apprehend myſelf the Object of others Hatred or Diſlike, I may bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apoſtles Portion, and make it my only Care to perſevere to the End, that ſo I may be ſaved.

O Jeſus, who didſt declare to thy Apoſtles, that Men would ſay all Manner of Evil againſt them, revile them, and accuſe them falſly: Grant, as often as any ſhall ſpeak Evil againſt me, revile me, or accuſe me falſly, that I bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apoſtles Portion, and make it my only Care to perſevere to the End, that ſo I may be ſaved.

O Jeſus, who didſt declare to thy Apoſtles, that they ſhould be perſecuted by their Kindred and neareſt Relations; be brought before Governors and Kings, and not only be put to Death, but that ſuch, as killed them, ſhould think they did God Service; but that he that perſevered to the End ſhould be ſaved:

ſaved: Grant, that as often as I ſhall ſuffer any Wrong, whether from Kindred or Strangers; as often as I ſhall be injured, oppreſſed, or perſecuted, either by Malice, falſe Zeal, or Miſtake, I may bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apoſtles Portion; and, inſtead of complaining make it my only Care to perſevere to the End, that ſo I may be ſaved.

O Jeſus, who being Lord of the Univerſe, and having all Creatures at thy Command, didſt nevertheleſs chuſe a Life of Suffering, a Life of the Croſs, a Life of Martyrdom; ſo far, that there was no Sort of Affliction, Perſecution, or Cruelty, in which Thou waſt not exerciſed: Vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, that, as often as any Trouble gives me Diſquiet, I may raiſe my Heart to Thee, and conſider the fair Occaſion I have of being united to Thee. Grant, I may not only be patient, but even rejoice, in being called to take Part in that Life, which has ſome Reſemblance to thine; and that I may go under every Weight that oppreſſes me, as under that Part of thy Croſs which Thou haſt given me to carry: But then, O Jeſus, let it be with the Spirit of the Croſs. O Jeſus, who after many Tribulations didſt aſcend from the Humility of the Croſs to the Glory of Heaven; didſt command thy Diſciples to follow Thee, and encourage them in their Sufferings, with the Promiſe of eternal Bleſſings: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, whenever Troubles fall upon me, I may not then yield to Nature, nor give

give Attention to the Complaints of Fleſh and Blood; but that remembring myſelf to be in the Way, which Thou haſt ſanctified, which Thou haſt choſen for thy moſt faithful Servants, as the ſureſt Way to an eternal Crown, I may go on in this Hope, and even there find the Comfort of Faith, where Nature ſees no Motives but of Grief and Deſpair.

O Jeſus, who ſeeſt all my Weakneſs, and, when Troubles come, how unlike I am to a Diſciple: Mercifully now hear my Prayer, and give me a better Spirit; that, as often as any Occaſion of Diſquiet happens, I may reſolutely withſtand all Inclinations to Impatience, and labour ſo to compoſe my Mind, that I may peaceably ſubmit to all Difficulties, and only be ſolicitous for this one Thing; *How to ſuffer as a Diſciple of Jeſus.* Behold, my Redeemer, I lay open my Deſires before Thee: Thou knoweſt how uneaſy it is to me, to ſee myſelf ſo ſubject to Impatience, and that, upon ſuch trifling Occaſions, I break into a Storm. Thou knoweſt likewiſe, what a Bleſſing I ſhould eſteem it, could I keep my Soul more compoſed, and in a calm Submiſſion wait upon thy holy Will, in all that happens to afflict me. Wherefore I beſeech Thee to grant my Requeſt, and to let thy Grace be the Remedy of all my Weakneſs. How long, O Lord, how long ſhall I thus go on with the Impatience of an Unbeliever, and ſtill making Profeſſion of being thy Diſciple.

In Time of preſent TROUBLE.

THOU haſt promiſed, O God, to hear thoſe who call upon Thee in Time of Trouble, and to be their Helper: Have Regard therefore, I beſeech Thee, to me thy unworthy Servant, in a Day wherein my Soul is diſturbed, and ſtands in need both of thy Comfort and Help. Thou ſeeſt what my Trouble is, and how great is my Danger from my own Weakneſs; have Compaſſion therefore, and, according to my Neceſſities, ſo ſhew thyſelf a God, a Father, and a Helper to me.

What I principally aſk of Thee is, That I may not offend Thee, in this my Trouble; but that I may bear it with Patience, and with that true Submiſſion as becomes a Diſciple of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

For what is all my Profeſſion of following the Goſpel, if now, when I am called to the Trial, I take no Care to practice what it teaches, but depart from all its Rules, as if I were an Unbeliever?

And to what End have I ſo often prayed, That thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; if now, when I ſee, what thy Will is, I am ſo far from approving it, that in my Diſturbance, Impatience, and Complaints, there is too great Evidence of my rebelling againſt it?

Look

Look therefore with the Eye of Pity upon me; and, as Thou art pleaſed to call me to this Exerciſe, ſo I beſeech thy infinite Goodneſs to prepare me for it.

Give me Grace, O Lord, to moderate both my Grief and Paſſion; that I neither ſink under any Degree of ſinful Dejection, nor be carried away with any Violence.

Nature is diſturbed, and inclines to both Extremes; but, as Thou art Lord of all, ſo I beſeech Thee now ſo to manifeſt thy Power, that all that is within me, may own its Subjection to Thee, and obey thy Will.

Let not Nature prevail, where thy infinite Power is called in to govern it; but now, having a poor Creature imploring thy Aſſiſtance againſt it, ſhew thyſelf to be my God.

§. II.

Behold then the Diſturbance of my Soul, ſee all the various Workings of my uneaſy Mind; and by the Power of thy Grace compoſe this Storm.

Put a Stop to all my roving Thoughts, and let not my Spirits waſte themſelves in vain Imaginations or impertinent Amuſements; for theſe ſerve only to delude, and too often with Danger of Sin, but cannot cure.

Take from me all Vexation, Fretfulneſs, and Impatience; and let no Bitterneſs, Melancholy, or reſtleſs Solicitude diſtract my Mind.

Mercifully

Mercifully prevent in me all Degrees of Diſtruſt; and never permit me to give Scandal, by paſſionate or raſh Expreſſions.

Quiet my Reaſoning, and ſuffer me not, by my falſe Conſtructions, to do Wrong to Innocence or Juſtice, or to reaſon againſt all Reaſon.

Thus, O God, compoſe both my inward and outward Man; and deliver me, in this Trouble, from all that is ſinful.

Let me not ſeek Relief from any Thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee; but rather chuſe to ſuffer all Extremities, than admit of any Help which is not according to thy Law.

Let my only Comfort be in Thee: And now, O God, raiſe up my Heart to thy Seat of Mercy, that from thence I may wait for Help.

And this Help, let it be ſuch, O God, as Thou knoweſt beſt for me.

For, behold, my Lord, I deſire to give myſelf wholly into thy Hands; becauſe Thou art my God, and forſakeſt none that truſt in Thee.

May this Thought be always in my Mind, that I am in thy Care; that whatever I ſuffer is not the Effect of Chance, but according to thy bleſſed Will.

That as the Sparrows fall not to the Ground without Thee. and as the Hairs of my Head are numbered before Thee: So nothing can touch me, or come to my Portion, unknown to Thee; but all muſt be according to Thy Appointment.

And

And what greater Comfort can I have, than to be thus in the Hands of God, whoſe Wiſdom and Goodneſs are infinite, and cannot propoſe any Thing but what is for my Good: Whoſe bittereſt Portions have a Mixture of the greateſt Mercy, and who even then heals, when he ſeems to ſtrike?

§. III.

Having this Aſſurance, behold, O my God, I deſire to reſt in Thee; I deſire nothing more, but that thy holy Will be accompliſhed in me.

Do with me therefore, Lord, as Thou wilt. Thy Will is holy, mine is corrupt and blind; what then have I to do, but to fear and renounce my own; to approve, adore, and follow thine?

This being my Duty, behold, I here bow down in Submiſſion to thy bleſſed Will, and I deſire all that is within me may bend before Thee.

I accept of all Thou doſt, and queſtion nothing; for tho' there be ſomething afflicting to Nature; yet this is no Exception againſt thy Appointments.

Are not my Sins many, and have not I ungratefully offended Thee, in the Abuſe of thy greateſt Bleſſings? And if now thy Hand be upon me, have not I Reaſon to ſubmit to thy Juſtice!

Is this any more than I have provoked upon my own Head? And if I draw Judgments upon myſelf, have I Reaſon to complain?

Is there not rather Motive to rejoice, for that Thou ſuffereſt me not to go on unpuniſhed in my Sins; but giveſt me this Diſturbance, to awaken my unthinking and ſtupid Soul?

Is there not a Mixture of Mercy with thy Juſtice, whilſt Thou thus convinceſt me of the Uncertainty of this World, and of all that is in it?

Whilſt taſting of its Gall, Thou giveſt me a Diſreliſh of it, and effectually teacheſt me, there is no true Happineſs in all whatever it offers?

Whilſt thus Thou calleſt upon me, to raiſe up my Deſires to Heaven, and to ſeek ſuch Comforts there, as cannot fail?

Is not this a Mercy in a bewitching World, where ſo many go on undiſturbed in their Follies, never thinking to provide for a future State, till the Terror of Death approaching puts them in mind of it, and at the ſame Time tells them it is too late?

§. IV.

Is it not a Mercy, that, amidſt ſuch Exceſs of Pride, Thou thus giveſt me Occaſion of being humbled, and of knowing myſelf.

That, by this preſent Trouble, Thou convinceſt me of my manifold Weakneſs, and

ſheweſt

ſheweſt me, what, for the future, I have to labour for, and what to aſk?

Why then doſt thou complain, my Soul, and ſink, as if there were no Place for Comfort; when, all Accounts being made up, the Mercy of God abounds in the Midſt of thy Affliction, and obliges thee to give Thanks?

Be careful then, what thou doſt; and ſee thou go not on like an Unbeliever. If God and Heaven be nothing to thee, grieve and murmur on as thou wilt; thy Unhappineſs is not then from what afflicts thee, but from thy Unbelief.

But if God be in thy Creed, and from thy Heart thou believeſt in him, act not as a Heathen; but let Faith govern thee, more than the Senſe of what is preſent.

If then Nature grieves for what is afflicting to Nature; let Faith be comforted and rejoice, in the Advantages of a future State.

In thy preſent Trial, there is Matter to exerciſe both Nature and Faith. But conſider, in a Chriſtian which ought to overrule.

Thou art no longer a Chriſtian than thou art governed by Faith. If then thou caſteſt off all Thoughts of Comfort, where thou haſt Offers for advancing thy eternal Intereſt, is it not too plain, that Nature has the Command of thee, and not Faith?

Do better then, and now from this Moment let all thy inward Motions depend upon thy eternal Concern, and there learn to rejoice,

joice, where there is Hopes of this going well.

And is it not ſo at preſent, where the very Thing, that is the Subject of thy Complaint, is attended with many Mercies; ſuch as require only thy Management to become ſo many Steps to Heaven?

It being accepted, as the Puniſhment due to thy paſt Offences; as the Exerciſe of thy Humility and Patience; as the Motive of bending thy Soul to God; of knowing the World, and deſpiſing its deceitful Goods; of ſeeking God with Sincerity, and deſiring to come to the Poſſeſſion of him.

How great Advantages are theſe to Eternity! If then this be thy Buſineſs, ſee whether thou haſt not more Reaſon to be comforted, than to complain; if thy Reaſon be governed by Faith.

§. V.

Thus certainly it is: But, O God, Thou ſeeſt my Weakneſs to be ſuch, that, inſtead of making any Advantage of my preſent Trouble, I am rather a Loſer by it.

Rather adding new Sins, than cancelling the old, and ſo far from ſeeking Thee with greater Earneſtneſs, that the little I have hitherto done in thy Worſhip and Service, is now either omitted or done worſe.

Help

Help me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, O merciful Father, and remedy this great Weakneſs.

Give me Patience, in this my Trouble, and by thy heavenly Grace ſupport my Soul, that it ſink not under this preſent Weight.

Teach me to be wiſe, in the right Management of what I ſuffer, that I may improve my preſent Misfortune, to the Good of my Soul.

Awaken my Faith, and ſo ſtrengthen it, that it may prevail againſt Nature, quiet all its Paſſions, and make me aſhamed of grieving like a Heathen, when I am called upon by Heaven to ſuffer as a Chriſtian.

Confirm me in Hope, that amidſt whatever I ſuffer I may reſt with an entire Confidence in Thee; and that I may never think myſelf miſerable as long as I have the Comfort of thy Promiſes, and the Aſſurance of thy Protection.

Raiſe up my Heart from under the preſent Weight; and let me not vainly buſy my Thoughts in what is paſt, and now is not, but in what is preſent. For how many great Bleſſings do I now enjoy, which demand my Thanks? And is it not a ſhameful Ingratitude, to forget all theſe, as if they were not, becauſe I have one taken from me, or ſuffer in one.

How many good Things have I received from thy Hand, without ever thinking of the Mercy? And now being touched in one, which has been likewiſe thy Gift, how am I diſturbed?

Grant me, O God, a better Spirit, and teach me to ſubmit to thy Hand, with Thankſgiving,

giving, whether it brings a Bleſſing or a Scourge; eſpecially, ſince what ſeems to me a Scourge may be the greater Bleſſing.

For while I am thus oppreſſed with Grief, as unhappy, I muſt confeſs my Ignorance, that I know not, what is beſt for me.

This is known to Thee, and, being thy Appointment, the Faith of thy infinite Goodneſs obliges me to think it for my Good. And what then do I in grieving, but call in Queſtion thy Wiſdom, or doubt of thy Goodneſs to me?

§. VI.

If I look on thy only Son, I have Reaſon to think well of the Afflictions of this Life; ſince all his Life was nothing but a Croſs and Martyrdom.

If I give ear to this Voice, I have Reaſon to be comforted in my Troubles; ſince he invites all to take up their Croſs, and thus to follow him.

If I hearken to his Promiſes, I have Reaſon to rejoice; ſince the Mourning of this World is promiſed to be changed into Joy.

If I conſider his Apoſtles, I have Reaſon to give Thanks; ſince, they being Perſons of his own Choice, and for whom he had prepared an eternal Crown, their whole Lives were nothing but Diſtreſs, Oppreſſion, and Perſecution.

Thus, if I compare my preſent Circumſtances with thoſe, who have been the Models

dels of a Chriſtian Life, I find ſufficient Motives for baniſhing all Complaints, and to think of nothing elſe but of the Fruits of Suffering, and how to ſuffer ſo, as to be in Hopes of obtaining them.

I have Encouragement enough for this Hope, ſince, from thy ſacred Word, is given me this Aſſurance; that, if we ſuffer with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo be glorified together with him.

And is it not from the ſame I am informed, that the Sufferings of this Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that is to come? Why then is Suffering the Occaſion of my Grief; when, being ſo ſhort, the divine Goodneſs has made it the Price of an eternal Crown?

When our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

This Proſpect, this Hope, kept up the Spirits of the Apoſtles amidſt far greater Trials than mine, ſo that while their outward Man periſhed, yet they fainted not; but their inward Man was renewed Day by Day.

They looked not at the Things which are ſeen; but at the Things which are not ſeen: For the Things, that are ſeen, are temporal; but the Things, which are not ſeen, are eternal. And why do not I look at the ſame, that I may be comforted with the ſame Hope?

§. VII.

Learn then from the Apoſtles, who were by Chriſt appointed thy Maſters and Teachers. Learn from St. *Paul*, who eſteemed all Things but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt.

Who for Chriſt ſuffered the Loſs of all Things, and counted them but as Dung, that he might win Chriſt and be found in him.

Who learned, in whatever State he was, therewith to be content: Who knew how to be in Diſtreſs, and how to abound.

Who every where, and in all Things, was inſtructed, both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to ſuffer Need; who could do all Things, through Chriſt, that ſtrengthened him.

Who was often in Labours, often ſcourged, often in Priſons, and in Deaths often: Once ſtoned, thrice Ship-wrecked, and in all Kinds of Perils. And yet hear what he ſays: *I am filed with Comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation.*

And can'ſt Thou, my Soul, only read, but learn nothing of this Leſſon? Thou haſt the ſame Maſter to teach thee, the ſame God to help Thee, and the ſame Heaven for the Encouragement of thy Patience.

Why then, art thou ſo unlike him, having no Trials to compare with his; and yet caſt down with Grief, where he is full of Joy?

And

And ſtill thou profeſſeſt thyſelf a Diſciple to the ſame Maſter; bluſh, and be aſhamed of thy Weakneſs, who, being a Diſciple to a Crucified Lord, has not yet learned to ſtand againſt Trifles.

See how little Occaſions are too much for thy Patience: And when thou owneſt the greateſt Puniſhments to be due to thy Sins, even that an ordinary Trial is more than thou canſt bear, without Murmuring and Diſturbance.

Is this to be a Follower of the Apoſtles, and a Diſciple of Jeſus? Thy Rule is to ſuffer all Things; and thy Practice is to ſuffer nothing, but in Rebellion.

For what is all Paſſion, Grief, Reſentment, Fretting, Dejection, and Melancholy, but a Diſlike of God's Will, and the Expreſſions of an Unwillingneſs to ſubmit to it?

What are they, but ſo many Declarations againſt what God has ordered: And how does this agree with what thou every Day prayeſt for, that God's Will may be done?

§. VIII.

O God, I own, this gives me a very ill Character of myſelf, but, behold, I lay all Weakneſs before Thee, and moſt earneſtly implore thy Goodneſs to remedy it.

If I approved my Unhappineſs, or was pleaſed with this my Infirmity, I ſhould then deſpair of thy Help; but ſince Thou art Witneſs, that it is a Trouble to me, and that I eſteem it my Misfortune to be thus weak; I hope Thou wilt have Compaſſion on me, and,

and give me Grace to be more patient in Provocations, and more ſubmiſſive under whatever Trials Thou ſhalt pleaſe to ſend me.

And now, I beſeech Thee, to forgive my preſent Impatience, pardon me all my rebellious and uneaſy Thoughts; remove all Solicitude; take away all Diſtruſt; and now, from this Moment, ſo calm my Spirits, that I may reſign myſelf entirely into thy holy Hands; ſubmit with Peace to all thy Orders; judge that beſt, whatever Thou appointeſt, and confide in thy Goodneſs; that Thou wilt remember thy Promiſes to the Diſtreſſed and Deſolate; be a Father and Comforter to me; and either deliver me from my preſent Trouble, or help me to bear it, as a Chriſtian ought to do, to the Glory of thy Name, and the Good of my own Soul.

And Thou, O Jeſus, have Mercy on me: Thou, who haſt undertaken to be our Advocate to the Father, plead now for me; obtain Pardon of my Sins. Thou, who haſt been a Man of Sorrow, who haſt known what Affliction is, have Compaſſion on me, in my Trouble, and obtain Patience for me, that I may ſuffer, as becomes a Follower of Thee. Behold, I turn to Thee, pouring forth my Soul before Thee, under the Senſe of my preſent Neceſſity. I know, thy Mercies to poor Sinners are infinite, and I have ſuch Confidence in them, that I hope, Thou wilt hear my Prayer, and grant the Requeſt I now make to Thee.

§. IX.

Jeſu, Son of the Living God; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who being God, equal to the Father, tookeſt upon Thee the Form of a Servant, waſt deſpiſed and rejected by Men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt born in a Stable, laid in a Manger, becauſe there was no Room for Thee in the Inn, and thus beganſt to ſuffer, as ſoon as Thou waſt born; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, whoſe Life was ſought by *Herod*, and didſt fly into *Egypt*, to eſcape his Cruelty; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who, at eight Days old, was circumciſed, and didſt then begin to ſhed thy Blood for Man; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who didſt faſt forty Days in the Deſart, and waſt there tempted by the Devil; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who didſt travel on Foot thro' Heat and Cold, hungry and thirſty, preaching the Kingdom of God, and hadſt no where to lay thy Head; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who didſt go forth to the Mountain, and there continuedſt all Night, in Prayer; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu,

Jeſu, who waſt ſo undervalued, as for the Sake of a few Swine to be removed out of the Country of the *Gergeſenes*; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who having by thy Divine Power caſt out a Devil, waſt accuſed by the envious Phariſees, as having wrought this Wonder by the Power of the Devil; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt repreſented by the Multitude as a Glutton, a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt reproached in thy own Country, and deſpiſed; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who preaching to thy People, waſt thruſt out of the City, and led to the Brow of a Hill, to be caſt down Head-long; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, againſt whom the Jews murmured, whilſt Thou waſt inſtructing them in the Truth; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt hated by the World, whilſt Thou waſt labouring to do it Good; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who teaching the Jews, waſt moſt infamouſly reproached by them, as having a Devil; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who hadſt thy Charity to the Jews ſo ill received, that they took up Stones to caſt at Thee; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who doing Good to all, hadſt the Jews conſpiring againſt Thee; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who proſtrate in the Garden, waſt covered with a bloody Sweat; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who didſt voluntarily open thy Soul to ſuch inward Grief, that it was ſad even unto Death; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who in this Anguiſh of Spirit, didſt aſk the Father to let the Cup paſs from Thee, and at the ſame Time didſt ſubmit it to thy Father's Will; thy Will be done; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt betrayed by thy own Diſciple, and ſold for thirty Pieces of Silver; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt forſaken by all thy Diſciples, and thrice denied by *Peter*; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt falſly accuſed before *Annas* and *Caiphas*, waſt ſtruck on the Face, and didſt ſuffer ſuch Contradiction of Sinners, againſt Thee; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt blind-folded, buffeted, ſpit upon; who gaveſt thy Back to the Smiters, and thy Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt delivered by thy own People to *Pilate*; deſpiſed and mocked by *Herod*; and given up by *Pilate* to the Will of the Jews;

Jews; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt ſcourged at a Pillar, crowned with Thorns, and ſtrucken with a Reed; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who having *Barrabbas* preferred before Thee, waſt condemned to a moſt ſhameful Death, waſt led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, not opening thy Mouth; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who didſt faint under thy Croſs, and, being come to *Mount Calvary*, waſt faſtened to it with Nails; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt reckoned with Tranſgreſſors, and crucified between two Thieves; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who waſt made the Scorn of Men; blaſphemed by thoſe that paſſed by; derided by the Jews; mocked by the Soldiers, and reviled by the Malefactors; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who, in thy great Thirſt, hadſt Gall and Vinegar given Thee to drink; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu, who dying didſt commend thy Spirit into the Hands of thy Father; who waſt obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs; *Give me Patience, that I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.*

Jeſu hear us.

Jeſus Chriſt, graciouſly hear us.

Let us pray.

LORD Jeſus Chriſt, who, in Mercy to Man, waſt pleaſed to ſuffer in all Kinds, that ſo Thou mighteſt be a perfect Maſter to him, and teach him, not only by Words, but alſo by Example: Mercifully vouchſafe, that as by Faith I confeſs Thee to be my Lord, ſo, by the Help of thy Grace, I may follow thy Example, and now, at this Time, by Humility and Patience, ſhew I am thy Diſciple. Never more let me be impatient, being an unworthy Sinner; while I ſee Thee, a ſpotleſs Lamb, my God and my Lord, voluntarily ſuffering ſuch Rigours. Give me therefore Patience, O my Lord Jeſus, that now, from this Moment, I may ſuffer, as thy Diſciple.

HUMILITY.

THIS Day I come before Thee, my Lord God, to complain againſt myſelf, for the great Pride, to which I am ſubject. I muſt confeſs it a very ſurprizing Thing even to me, that ſuch a poor, miſerable, and contemptible Sinner, as I am, ſhould be ſubject to this Evil, and find any Thing whereof to be proud: And

And yet ſo it is, that while I daily ſee myſelf worthy of Contempt; yet there is a general Pride accompanies me in all I do; even ſo far, that I ſcarce can think, or ſpeak, or do, or ſuffer any Thing, but there is ſtill ſome Deſign, Contrivance, or Propoſal for gaining Eſteem to myſelf.

Thou ſeeſt, O my God, how it is with me, in this Point; and how great my Injuſtice is, in this general Contrivance for magnifying this deſpicable Clay. I fear a great Part is hid from me, which I ſee not; and yet ſo far I ſee, as gives me great Diſquiet, and is enough to humble me, did I but remember or believe what I ſee.

I ſee, I am nothing of myſelf, and have nothing of my own; and whatever I poſſeſs, of Nature or Fortune, is thy Gift, or rather, only lent me; ſo that, at thy Word or Demand, I am deprived of all; and left naked, without Senſes, Memory, or Underſtanding; without Form or Beauty; without Friends, or Health, or Neceſſaries for a common Subſiſtance. None of theſe are my own, but wholly depend upon thy Favour; and, if taken from me, I am no more capable of recovering, than the vileſt Worms that creep upon the Earth: So that whatever I have more than theſe, is not mine, but lent: And is there not ſomething humbling enough in this one Thing, without requiring more, that whatever Appearance a Perſon makes in this World, he has nothing that ſets him off, but what is borrowed, and muſt be returned again?

I ſee likewiſe, amidſt all the Appearance I can make, and the Height of my Eſteem, that my Ingredients are Filth, Rottenneſs, and Corruption; theſe are inſeparable from me; and continual Art and Care are neceſſary to conceal them; ſo that the beſt I can make of all my Glory is to reſemble a beautiful Sepulchre, which has no more than the Beauty of an outward Caſe, while all that is within is loathſome.

It is true, I have a rational Soul, admirable for its many Perfections, by which I am capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God. But, when I reflect upon the many Ways by which I abuſe this thy wonderful Gift, there is nothing more humbling to me, than this, which ought to be my greateſt Glory.

For what a Blemiſh is it upon me, that being created for the everlaſting Poſſeſſion of Thee, my God, I neglect this, and run after Trifles, Smoke, and Bubbles; and ſeek ſuch Things, as, pleaſing the Senſes, have nothing ſubſtantial in them? What is this, but to have the Weakneſs of Children, which give Rattles and Sugar-plumbs the Preferance to whatever is moſt valuable? This is certainly childiſh.

What an Undervaluing is it again, that being called to the Fellowſhip of Angels, and to the Glory of thy eternal Kingdom, I make myſelf a Slave to Creatures; and this with the Hazard of becoming a Slave to Devils? This is certainly fooliſh.

What

What is it again, that, having Hell open before me, I go on ſporting and dancing, and comfortably entertaining myſelf in the very Ways that lead to it? This is certainly Madneſs.

What is it, that having the Sentence of Death paſſed againſt me, with the Day and the Hour appointed for Execution; and this without any Hopes of Reprieve; and haſtening on every Moment to the Place, where I am to die, I ſeek all Entertainments, and not only idle, but ſinful Diverſions, on the Way, as if I had the Command of Life in my own Hands, or there were no Neceſſity of preparing for what I am to ſuffer. This is certainly a Stupidity, and more than Madneſs.

What is it, that, being upon the Entrance into Eternity, I am more ſolicitous and buſy about a few Moments, that are the Way to it, and ſoon end, than upon that everlaſting Duration, which is never to have an End?

What is it, that having a God, who has encompaſſed me with many Bleſſings, and prepared yet greater for me, I go on, ſtudying how to pleaſe myſelf, but little concerned how to pleaſe him.

What is it, that having God, who, in Mercy to me, humbled himſelf to the Meanneſs of a Servant, ſo to become my Redeemer; I live almoſt unmindful of his Mercy, and every Day ungratefully rebel againſt him, as againſt an Enemy.

What is it, that living in a State of Pleaſure, for a few Moments, and ſeeking, for

this ſhort Time, to be eaſy, great, eſteemed, and honoured; I am every Day waiting, when I am to be ſnatched away, to be ſtripped of all I poſſeſs or admire, and may, in one Moment, be caſt under the Feet of Devils, and be made their Scorn for ever.

Theſe are Part of my Circumſtances, and help to make up my Character; in which there are ſeveral Particulars ſo very mean, baſe, miſerable, and contemptible, that one would think there needed no more to keep me in a perpetual Humility, and ſecure me againſt all the Dangers of Pride. For what can be more humbling, than this Childiſhneſs, this Blindneſs, this Folly, this Ingratitude, this Stupidity, this Madneſs, this Treachery! And yet behold, my God, ſuch is my Unhappineſs, that altho' I know myſelf thus miſerable, yet am I daily valuing this Clay in my own Heart, ſet it above others, as more worthy of Eſteem, and am endeavouring by all Ways to deceive others into an Opinion of its Deſerts.

Now this being an evident Injuſtice, and ſuch as has many pernicious Attendants; I beſeech Thee, O God, to grant me thy Grace, that I may make Reſiſtance againſt all Kinds of Pride; both as to its open Pretences, its diſguiſed Workings, and ſubtle Inſinuations. Give me a true Horror of it, as it deſerves; and ſince Thou haſt been pleaſed to expreſs thy Diſpleaſure againſt it, in thy ſevere Judgments againſt the Angels, ſo as to exped thoſe glorious Spirits from thy Preſence,

and

and change them into the Monſters of Devils; vouchſafe to poſſeſs my Soul with a continual Dread of this Evil, that I may always be afraid of provoking Thee by it.

For what can I expect, I, who am otherwiſe ſo great a Sinner, if I add this Provocation to all the reſt? What can I expect, who already ſtand ſo much in need of thy Mercy, if I take this Way of every Day encreaſing thy Diſpleaſure againſt me? Wherefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, to preſerve in my Mind a continual Senſe of my Miſery and great Unworthineſs: Let this be ever ſo before my Eyes, that I may ſee unreaſonable and unjuſt are all the Attempts how of Pride; that I may be reſolute in ſtanding againſt them, and never admit of that, which, in pretending to raiſe me, is the ſureſt Means of caſting me down into the loweſt Degree of Contempt, which is to be contemned by Thee.

For ſince I know, that it is neither I myſelf, nor the World, but Thou alone, my God, canſt make me happy; and all the Good I expect is from thy Favour; what can be more againſt Reaſon, than for me to ſeek the Eſteem of the World, or to be pleaſing in my own Eyes? Whatever I gain, in this Point, will it be any Gain to me? Shall I be nearer Heaven for this, or in greater Hopes of finding Grace in thy Sight? I confeſs, O God, all this will be nothing to my Advantage; but much rather my Loſs, in provoking me to Pride, and furniſhing me with continual Matter

Matter to feed it? And that my only Intereſt is, in being acceptable to Thee.

Grant then, O God, that my great Concern may be, not to pleaſe myſelf or the World, but to ſeek thy Favour! and ſince Thou haſt declared, That Thou regardeſt the Humble, and reſiſteſt the Proud; let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, to ſuppreſs all Motions of Pride, and to practiſe that true Humility, ſuch as the World eſteems not, but is above all eſteemed by Thee.

Deliver me from all Pride of Judgment, that I be never obſtinate againſt the Light of Reaſon or Faith; that I defend not Opinions with Paſſion, nor deſpiſe thoſe who join not with my Sentiments in Things that either have no Evidence, or are of little Concern: That I never undervalue thoſe, whoſe Capacity ſeems not great, nor endeavour to ſet off my own Abilities, by expoſing their Weakneſs. Rather, O God, let me be ever ready to yield to Truth, and never think it an Affront to my Judgment to ſubmit to thine. Let me allow to others the Freedom I take, and, in Things uncertain, ſuppoſe myſelf as much ſubject to miſtake as them. And, where-ever I imagine any Advantage in myſelf above others, let the next Thoughts be, whoſe Gift it is; what Thanks are due; and what an Account have I to give, who make ſo ill Uſe of what I have received. Thus, O God, while with Conſtancy I adhere to what Thou haſt been pleaſed to reveal, let me ever preſerve ſuch a Free-

Freedom of Judgment, as to all other Things, as to be jealous of all Obſtinacy and Stiffneſs, which can be ſuſpected as the Effects of Pride or Self-conceit.

Grant likewiſe, O God, that I may be watchful in ſuppreſſing all ſuch Thoughts as are buſy in admiring, valuing, or ſetting any Eſteem upon myſelf above others; as likewiſe all thoſe which give me Satisfaction in ſeeing the Weakneſſes, Indiſcretions, or Miſcarriages of others, which are an Occaſion of thinking better of myſelf, and of concluding that others will do ſo too. All Thoughts of this Kind I ſee to be the Effect of Pride; and therefore I beſeech Thee, O God, to defend me from them, or give me Grace to ſtand againſt them. Let me never think theſe innocent, which proceed from ſuch an ill Root, and ſerve only to magnify that which deſerves to be deſpiſed.

No, my God, as often as ſuch pleaſing Thoughts occur, let me caſt them off with Indignation; as not bearing any Thing favourable of ſo wretched a Creature, ſo ungrateful a Sinner, ſo wicked a Traitor as I am; let them ſerve to awaken in me the Thoughts of all my Miſery, and bring to my Remembrance my paſt and preſent Iniquities, by which I have provoked Thee, my God, and ſtand expoſed to an uncertain Eternity. And, if ſtill they importune and preſs upon me, let me turn to myſelf with Horror, and ſay, Have not the Devils, as they are, greater Excellencies and Abilities than thou

canſt

canſt boaſt of, and yet they are Devils ſtill? Why then doſt thou extol thyſelf, thou proud Clay?

Vouchſafe likewiſe to grant, O God, that upon receiving any Reproof, whether juſt or unjuſt, or upon apprehending myſelf affronted, ridiculed, ſlighted, or neglected, I may give a Check to all ſwelling, revengeful, contradictory, or reproaching Thoughts; as likewiſe to all Inclinations to Fretting, Vexation, or Sadneſs; for all theſe are nothing better than ſo many different Effects of an impatient Pride, which, not knowing how to bear ſuch Humiliation, has ſo many ſeveral Ways to expreſs its Averſion to them; and therefore ought never to be connived at as reaſonable, but reſiſted as ſinful.

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, that, through thy Grace, I may be ever watchful againſt all ſuch Motions or inward Diſturbance; ſo as to conſider them, as great Weakneſſes, and diſengage my Heart from them, as from the Enemies of my Soul: Let me then labour to make my proud Heart bend under the Exerciſe, and uſe all Means to compoſe my Thoughts according to the Goſpel. Turn all my Thoughts then upon my own Unworthineſs, and by that View, being convinced, how vile a Sinner I am, let me acknowledge the Juſtice of all that I ſuffer; and not only ſubmit to it with Patience, but cry out, Thou art juſt, O Lord, in all thy Ways; it is good that Thou haſt humbled me: I have often inſolently rebelled againſt Thee,

and

and now it is fit I ſhould be humbled. Thus, O God, let let me rather rejoice, than grieve under the Humiliation.

Help me likewiſe, O God, to receive all Correction, the Commands of thoſe over me, the Advice of Friends or others, with a peaceable and humble Mind: Let no Paſſion then grow upon me, nor impatient Reſentments diſturb my Soul, nor a ſullen Obſtinacy harden me againſt the Charity deſigned for my Good. Aſſiſt me, I beſeech Thee, in theſe Circumſtances, to defeat all the Attempts of Pride, and to ſtifle thoſe Inclinations which may be then riſing from the Corruption of my Heart; let thy powerful Grace diſpel them all, and work in my Soul a general Calm; let me then know what it is to be humble, and by Humility both preſerve my inward Peace, and receive the Benefit of others Piety towards me.

I implore thy Grace again for the Remedy of another inward Pride; ſuch as makes me unwilling to own Miſtakes, and to mend them, when their Diſcovery is not from myſelf, but from what I obſerve or hear from others. This is certainly Pride, and ſhews that I have a greater Value for myſelf, than for Right or Truth; ſince I chooſe to deſert theſe, rather than own that I have been in the Wrong. This has no Cure but by Humility, which I now aſk of Thee, my God, and beſeech Thee to grant it; that by this my Spirit may be brought to the Temper of the Goſpel, and my Soul fitted to receive the manifold Bleſſings of thy Mercy, which I every Day want.

But,

But, above all, deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all ſpiritual Pride; from Preſumption; from all vain Confidence in my own Merits; from valuing myſelf as juſt, and deſpiſing others as not ſo good. Theſe, I confeſs, are the Characters of the *Phariſee*; are enough to make void and quite overthrow whatever Good a Chriſtian may otherwiſe do, ſo as to be rejected by God, while he is pleaſing himſelf with the Imagination of being a Saint. I moſt earneſtly therefore implore thy Grace, O God, that this may not be my Sin; that I may carefully watch againſt it, and, with ſpeed, reject all thoſe Thoughts which put me in Danger of it. Grant, O God, that I may be afraid of that againſt which Thou haſt ſo plainly declared thy Diſpleaſure. Let me never exalt myſelf in my own Thoughts, nor undervalue others; for this is thy Prerogative to be Judge of all; and, if I uſurp it, this muſt be to my own Ruin. O God, form in me ſuch a Heart as is pleaſing to Thee, and let me leave it to Thee to be my Judge and my Crown.

Having hitherto begged thy Aſſiſtance againſt inward Pride, that is, the Pride of the Heart, I now implore thy Help againſt all the Branches of it; and, in the firſt Place, that it may not ſhoot forth into the Tongue, or have any Influence upon my Words. In this Point, I beſeech Thee, O God, to ſhew thy Mercy, and grant the Petition of thy Servant; for I acknowledge here my Weakneſs, and that I am in great Want of thy Help.

For

For how often do I publiſh, and even force ſuch Things into Diſcourſe, as I think will help to raiſe my Reputation with others, and gain their Eſteem; although, at the ſame Time, I know, that ſuch as ſeek Glory with Men, have in this received the Reward of whatever Good they have done, and are to expect nothing from God?

How often do I draw others into ſuch Diſcourſe, and, by ſome Hints, inſenſibly bring it on, though, at the ſame Time, pretending an Unwillingneſs to ſpeak of ſuch a Subject?

How often do I tell Untruths in Favour of Vanity; adding or diminiſhing as may be ſerviceable to this End; and thus ſacrilegiouſly endeavouring to raiſe myſelf by trampling upon thy Commandments?

How often do I pretend the Knowledge of what I know not, for feeding my own vain Humour?

How often do I lay open the Indiſcretions and Failings of others, that I may ſhew the great Advantage I have over them?

How often do I break forth into paſſionate Apologies, into Quarrels and Diſputes, upon the Suggeſtion of Pride, becauſe I have not Humility to bear any Thing that is provoking, or ſeems to be an Affront to me?

How often do I make bold with Truth, and, by forced Gloſſes and Conſtructions, conceal whatever I apprehend will be a leſſening to me?

How often does a vain Oſtentation employ my Tongue, and even ſometimes ſo as to boaſt

boaſt of ſuch Things of which I ought to be aſhamed?

Innumerable, O God, are the Ways in which my Tongue is in the Service of my Pride. And this ſhews the great Corruption of my Heart, and how much it ſtands in Need of thy Grace. Conſider me therefore, O God, of Mercy, under all this my Weakneſs, of which now I am aſhamed, and give me Grace to amend: Give me Grace to reſiſt theſe ſeveral Motions of Pride; teach me to govern my Tongue, and then ever to be ſilent, when Pride or Vanity want ſome Speeches to be made for them. I have hitherto given theſe too much the Liberty of my Tongue: I wiſh I could ſay with Truth, I had as often employed it to thy Glory: But ſee here my great Miſery, O God, I ſpeak freely in an ill Cauſe; but when I am to ſpeak for Thee, here I am aſhamed; and that very Baſhfulneſs, which ought to reſtrain me from Sin, is a Tie upon me, and hinders me from doing Good. In this I ſee how miſerable I am, and therefore now appeal to thy infinite Goodneſs to have Compaſſion on me, and to grant me this Petition, that Pride or Vanity may have no more the Command of my Tongue.

§. II.

But I have ſtill a farther Petition to Thee, O God, againſt theſe Evils; for, upon Inquiry, I find, that not only my Tongue, but almoſt

almoſt all the Actions of my Life have been confederate, and unhappily drawn in to take Part with them againſt Thee, I am aſhamed to ſay it, againſt Thee, my God. In this, I confeſs, my Sins have been multiplied beyond Number: But, behold, my God, upon the Conviction of all this Pride, I now humble myſelf before Thee, this Day, moſt earneſtly imploring thy Mercy for the Pardon of all that is paſt, and thy Grace to ſtrengthen me, and to prevent all Return.

Pardon me, O God, for the numberleſs Times I have laid out Money in the Service of Pride or Vanity, and given theſe the Command of my Purſe. Here my Sins are a Confuſion to me, becauſe they are above Number; being ſcarce able to ſay, with Truth, that for ſome Years I have at any Time laid out Money without having Pride of my Council, and Vanity to give Directions how it ſhould be employed.

How far has this been done in Cloaths, Furniture, and providing for Table? In all which I have not ſo much as conſidered what Neceſſity or a moderate Decency required, as what was moſt agreeable to my own vain Humour; how to make myſelf more valuable in my own Opinion, and in that of the World. For this End, how much have I waſted, without regarding thoſe better Uſes in which I might have employed my Money to my own eternal Good? But ſo it has been; Variety has ſo prevailed, that, to favour and comply with this, I have neglected all what-

whatever belongs to Eternity. I have let the Poor ſtarve to feed my Pride.

Theſe have been crying Sins; but I beſeech Thee, O Lord, to pardon them; for, behold, I now ſee the great Iniquity of them, in hearkening to Vanity more than to thy Commands; in contriving to ſet out a rotten Carcaſs, and ſeeking to make that honourable, which, for its great Unworthineſs, deſerved nothing but to be deſpiſed. But now, humbled under the Senſe of theſe my Offences, I proſtrate myſelf before Thee, my God, and ſue for Mercy. Turn not thy Face away from me, but let me now find the Effect of thy infinite Goodneſs, by receiving into thy Favour one who has ſhewed himſelf unworthy of all Favours, by the many Bleſſings which hitherto he has ſo ungratefully abuſed.

But in vain do I aſk Forgiveneſs of what is paſt, if, by thy Grace, I be not ſtrengthened againſt this great Evil. Wherefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, O God, to take from me all Pride or Vanity, or prepare me to ſtand againſt it. Suffer me no more to follow its Suggeſtions, in laying out my Money, nor to have any Regard to whatever it adviſes. Let me no more conſult a vain World, or the corrupt Practices of Men, in what I have to do, ſince I cannot follow ſuch deceitful Guides, without intending to be led out of the Way. But let it be now my general Method, to conſider what *Neceſſity*, what *Reaſon*, what *Moderation*, what a *Prudent Decency* requires: Let it be my Rule in all Things,

Things, to examine what the *Goſpel* directs, what is moſt agreeable to thy *Holy Will*; and let this ever carry it againſt all other Inclinations and Motions whatever.

Thus, O God, may I go on, for the future, in all that belongs to Dreſſing, Furniture, Table, or Retinue: In all which, I beſeech thy infinite Goodneſs ſo to govern my Paſſions, that I may do what is reaſonable and chriſtian; but that I may not be prevailed on by Pretexts of Decency or Convenience, to flatter a vain Humour, which makes uſe of all Arguments to gain its Point. Vouchſafe, O Lord, to help me here, for I confeſs my Weakneſs, and that I can have no Confidence but in the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace. O God, what Treaſures might I have now laid up in Heaven for the eternal Comfort of my Soul, had I diſtributed that amongſt the Poor which I have laid out to ſatisfy my Pride! Prevent, I beſeech Thee, this ill Management, and, for the future, let thy Grace make me wiſer.

This ſame Petition I extend, O God, as to all other Particulars, that I may be delivered from the Tyranny of Pride. For I find its Commands to be very univerſal; even ſo far that there is ſcarce any Action, Appearance, Meeting, Viſit, Undertaking, or Propoſal of Life, but where Pride gives its Orders, is very much conſidered, and has a great Share in the Management of all that is done. And, how great a Confuſion ought this to be to Chriſtians, to reflect, that

that having received all from God, and being obliged to offer all to his Glory, make his Will their Rule, and ſeek him in all they do; they, inſtead of this, take Advice with Pride, and, as if Pride were there God, make this the Beginning and End of All? As far as it has been thus with me, (and how often, O God, has it been ſo?) I here acknowledge the Impiety of it; I ſolicit for thy Mercy, and beſeech Thee to forgive it; and here add this moſt hearty Requeſt, That, by the Help of thy Grace, I may have that true Horror of Pride as to deteſt all its Suggeſtions, and caſt all that by as unreaſonable, whatever it pleads for. May I be aſhamed, for the future, to ſet up ſuch an Idol, and rather chuſe to ſpurn at it, than follow it. Be thou my God, and as I worſhip Thee alone, ſo in all Things may I be ſolicitous to do Thy Will alone, and renounce whatever is contrary or diſagreeable.

For this End I implore thy Grace, that having a Senſe of thy holy Will, and of my Duty, I may not omit the leaſt Part of it, upon the Apprehenſion of any Diſgrace, or of being laughed at, either by Ignorance, Infidelity or Vice. For all ſuch Omiſſions, having Pride at the Root, they involve a Guilt, from which I here deſire to be delivered; and therefore beg, that I may have ſuch a true Humility, joined with the Love of Duty, as willingly to provoke Scorn, and expoſe myſelf to Contempt, by doing, on all Occaſions, what thy holy Will demands

of

of me: And even then, when I foreſee I ſhall be charged with all Hypocriſy or Vain-Glory.

This Degree of Humility I aſk, becauſe I know there is a vicious Sort of Baſhfulneſs, which is an Enemy to Virtue, and many Times deſtroys the Soul; becauſe it is aſhamed of Duty, when this happens to be reputed out of Faſhion, and therefore ſo often fails in it, as it happens into ill Company. No, ſince this Baſhfulneſs is an Effect of Pride, which cannot bear Contempt upon any Account, I ſee Humility to be neceſſary for the Practice of a Chriſtian Life, and, for this Reaſon, moſt humbly petition for it, that, by the Help of this, I may be freed from this ſo frequent Diſcouragement of all that is good.

I aſk again, O God, that whatever Duty I perform, whether in Devotion to Thee, or Charity to my Neighbour, or in the Obſervance of thy Commandments, I may do it with Purity of Intention, and the ſincere Deſire of doing thy holy Will; that ſo they may find Acceptance in thy Sight, in order to my eternal Good. Let none of theſe Exerciſes, I beſeech Thee, be defiled with Pride, nor let Vanity creep in to rob thy Altar of any of thoſe Sacrifices which belong to Thee. In all theſe may I ever ſeek thy Glory alone; and, if Thoughts of being reputed pious ſteal in, I deſire to renounce them, as ſacrilegious, and do at this Time moſt ſolemnly renounce them, as to what-

whatever Part of my Life is yet to come. For I know it is a moſt provoking Crime to prophane holy Things, and proſtitute them to common Uſes: And what then muſt it be to turn the Practices of Religion and Exerciſes of Devotion to the Service of Vanity? For, what is this but to take what belongs to God, and give it to his greateſt Enemies, to Self-love, to Pride, and to the Devil? From this, O God, I beſeech Thee to deliver me.

Upon the ſame Conſideration I aſk of Thee, that I may never be ſo indiſcreet as to let Pride feed upon Humility; and that if at any Time, thro' thy Grace, I practiſe any Degree of Humility, I may not be vain, or ſeek Glory in whatever I have done. Let all Glory be to Thee, O God; and as for me, let me glory in nothing but in being thought a weak, miſerable, and wretched Sinner, as I truly am. This is all that I can call my own; and, if I love Truth, I muſt deſire to be eſteemed ſo; and, If I deſire otherwiſe, I deſire a Lye. How great then, O God, is the Lye of Vanity and Pride! From this I beſeech Thee to deliver me.

And now, O God, that I may conclude all the numerous Branches of this ſpreading Evil under one Petition, I beſeech Thee ſo to aſſiſt me with thy heavenly Light and Grace, that I may diſcern and fight againſt all inward and outward Pride: Suffer me not to be blind and partial here, to abhor it in one Way, and let it be a Favourite in another. This is what I very much ſuſpect, and fear in myſelf, as knowing how eaſy it is to be deceived,

deceived, in condemning the particular Pride of ſome with a greater Pride of my own. But, againſt this Deluſion, I beg thy Aſſiſtance, O God; making it my Requeſt to Thee, that my Humility may be ſincere, and ſhew itſelf in the equal Abhorrence of all Kinds of Pride.

Poſſeſs my Mind with a Contempt of the Applauſe of Men; and let it be my conſtant Judgment, that there is no other Greatneſs worth my ſeeking, but to be great with Thee. For this End, may it be my daily Buſineſs to obſerve what is moſt capable of recommending me to this Favour. And ſince thy Will in this is already declared, that Thou exalteſt the Humble, and reſiſteth the Proud, let it be my perpetual Care to decline all the Methods of Pride, and to follow whatever I apprehend to be that Humility which Thou approveſt. And if, by ſo doing, I am pointed at, cenſured as a Hypocrite, or made the Scorn of Men, let not this be my Trouble, to be deſpiſed by thoſe whoſe good Word I have more Reaſon to fear than ſeek; but let it be my Comfort, that, being here humbled, I am in the ſureſt Way of being exalted by Thee.

And, if there be any here on Earth, whoſe good Opinion I ought to value, let it not be thoſe who admire Noiſe, Flutter, Vanity, and Smoke, but thoſe who eſteem nothing more honourable than Virtue, and the ſtrict Obſervance of the Goſpel of Chriſt. According to this Method, may I never ſeek

Eſteem from outward Ornaments, from Attendants, Titles, Preferments, or taking Place; for what is there of real Worth in all theſe, which are as much the Claim of Infidels, and of the greateſt Sinners, as of any others; and under all which a Perſon may be the moſt contemptible before Thee, through the great Deformity of his Soul, and the Abominations in which he lives.

But let it be my Concern to ſeek the Ornaments of the inward Man, and to walk in the Ways of Charity, Humility, Moderation, Meekneſs, and Peace; not to be conformed to the World, to mortify the Deeds of the Fleſh, and to live by the Spirit. For tho' in this Way the World may deſpiſe me, yet I am ſure to be eſteemed by Thee, and by all thoſe who know what the Honour of Virtue is; and this is much more to the Purpoſe than all the World can do. For the Applauſe of the World, with all its Honours, periſhes with the Breath of Men, is ſoon laid in Duſt, ſwallowed up by the Grave, and, too often followed with the eternal Contempt of Devils; but the Glory, that is from Thee, has preſent Comforts above what the World can give, and brings forth Fruit to the everlaſting Bliſs of the Soul.

O God, who didſt hear the Petition of thy Servant *Abraham*, when, in the Confeſſion of being Duſt and Aſhes, he humbled himſelf in thy Sight; mercifully grant, that in the ſame Spirit I may make my Addreſſes to Thee; and not in the Profeſſion of Words, but,

but, by a real Humility, endeavour to gain thy favourable Acceptance of whatever Petitions I offer to Thee that are for my eternal Good.

O God, who haſt given us the Inſtance of an excellent Spirit in thy Servant *David*, firſt, in humbling himſelf like the meaneſt of his Subjects, before the Ark; then, in not regarding the Scorn of *Michol*, who both reproached him with Words, and deſpiſed him in her Heart; and laſtly, in reſolving, amidſt the Heat of theſe Reproaches, to humble himſelf ſtill more, and become more vile and baſe in his own Sight: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, by his Example, I may learn not to be too nice in what humbles; that no Apprehenſion of Reproach may diſcourage me from thy Service; but that I may rather willingly embrace Contempt, where-ever Duty preſſes, or thy Glory is concerned. Great Grace is neceſſary for thus overcoming Nature, and making Pride yield; but nothing is difficult, O God, to Thee.

O God, who in the Kings and People of *Iſrael* humbling themſelves in thy Sight, and thus turning away thy Judgments from them, which they had provoked by their Sins, haſt, in this ſhewed us how powerful a true Humiliation is with Thee, for obtaining thy Mercy, grant, I beſeech Thee, that, in this ſo approved Method, I may daily ſeek thy Mercy, that, knowing myſelf a Sinner, I may truly humble myſelf as be-

comes a Sinner, and thus endeavour to prevent thoſe ſevere Judgments, which I have provoked by Pride. How great, O God, is thy Goodneſs, in calling upon Sinners, and ſhewing them how to find Mercy! And how blind are Sinners, in following the Ways of Pride, when they know, how provoking it is to Thee.

O God, who in *Eſther* has given us a wonderful Example of Humility, in her hating the Glory of the Wicked, in abhorring the Marks of her Dignity, which ſhe wore on her Head, in deteſting it as a menſtrous Rag; in being in the Greatneſs of a Court, and yet having no Joy but in Thee alone: Vouchſafe, I beſeech Thee, to grant me this Spirit, that, having a Knowledge of my own Unworthineſs, I may have likewiſe an Abhorrence of whatever is to ſet forth this ſinful Clay: That I may diſlike whatever Part of it my Circumſtances oblige me to uſe: That I may have no Satisfaction in what is ſo unjuſt, but only in Thee, my God. O bleſſed God! How far am I from this holy Diſpoſition of Soul, who am fond of all that, which thy choſen Servants abhor, and ſeek that, which they decline! Create in me a new Heart, O God, that I may no more be in Love with Vanity; but ſeek Thee above all Things, who alone art my Happineſs.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who, coming into this World to teach us the Way to Salvation, didſt chooſe the poor, mean, and humble Things of this World, and hadſt no part in its State, Riches,

Riches, Vanity or Greatneſs: Mercifully grant, that, profeſſing myſelf thy Diſciple, I may be always mindful, that it is my Duty to follow thy Spirit. Give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, to follow it; and let this be the daily Proof, that I chuſe the contemptible Things of this World, and decline all its Pomps and Greatneſs: For how ſhall I be a Diſciple of Chriſt, if I walk contrary to him, and even follow the World!

O Jeſus, who haſt commanded all thy Followers to learn of Thee, who art meek and humble of Heart, that ſo they may find Reſt for their Souls: Give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, to learn this Leſſon; that I may be in all Things meek, and truly humble of Heart. Great and frequent are the Diſturbances cauſed within me by Pride, Stubbornneſs, and Paſſion, often they ſet me at Difference with my Neighbour. Meekneſs and Humility are preſcribed by Thee, as the Way to Peace; O Jeſus! When ſhall I thus ſeek Reſt for my Soul!

O Jeſus, who didſt put thy Apoſtles in mind, that Thou cameſt into this World, not to be ſerved, but to ſerve, and didſt command them to become the Servants of all: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that by thy Humility, my Pride may be cured; ſo that as often as, for the future, I ſhall be put upon Things which ſeem beneath me, I may not be diſturbed and ſwell, as one affronted, but rejoice in the Opportunity of practiſing that Humility, which Chriſt, both by Word and

Example, has taught me. For why ſhould I, a Sinner, think any Thing beneath me, when Thou, my Redeemer and my God, didſt ſtoop to the meaneſt of all Things?

O Jeſus, who didſt condemn the Phariſees, for loving to be honoured by Men; for ſeeking the chief Seats in the Synagogue and at Feaſts, and for endeavouring to be reputed devout: Preſerve me, I beſeech Thee, from theſe Evils; that, while I make Profeſſion of being thy Diſciple, I may not act like a Phariſee. And what elſe am I, if I let all their Vanity prevail in my Heart, and am governed by it? If I ſtudy to be reſpected, and ſacrifice my Money and Time for this End; if I am ſolicitous for taking Place, and have no Charity for thoſe, who either deny or diſpute it with me; if I affect Titles, and contrive all Ways for gaining Eſteem; What are theſe but the very Ingredients which make up the Phariſee! How miſerable then muſt my Condition be, while I follow not that which Chriſt taught, but the very Things he condemned in his greateſt Enemies? O Jeſus, when wilt Thou reform this unhappy Soul?

O Jeſus, who haſt declared to us, That he, who exalts himſelf, ſhall be humbled; and he, who humbles himſelf, ſhall be exalted: Give me Grace, I beſeech Thee, to remember this Leſſon, and to make it the Rule of my Life. I muſt here own it with Confuſion before Thee, that, tho' Thou haſt thus plainly manifeſted thy Will to us, it made ſo little

Impreſſion

Impreſſion on me, that I have hitherto contrived in all Things to exalt myſelf, and have been afraid of every Thing that humbles, as of a Misfortune, rather than embraced it as a Chriſtian Good. O Jeſus, and what will be my eternal Lot, if I thus go on calling Thee Lord, and regarding nothing that Thou ſayeſt to me? Pardon, I beſeech Thee, this great Neglect, and now change my Heart; that, making Eternity my great Buſineſs, I may chuſe to be humbled on Earth, that I may be exalted by Thee; and be afraid of every Thing that exalts here, leſt, with the Proud of Heart, I be caſt off from Thee.

O Jeſus, who, in the Perſon of the Phariſee, haſt ſhewed us, how criminally diſpleaſing it is to Thee, to confide in ourſelves, or in what we do, and to deſpiſe others: And in the Publican has diſcovered, how powerful true Humility is, for obtaining the Favour of Heaven: Poſſeſs my Soul, I beſeech Thee, with the Senſe of what Thou haſt taught; make me afraid of every Thought, that is in Favour of myſelf, and inclines me to reſt with Confidence in what I have done. Give me a Horror of every Glance that ſeems a leſſening to my Neighbour; and this more eſpecially, if it be attended with a Contempt of him; ſince I cannot deſpiſe him, but it will be to my own Prejudice in the Danger of loſing Thee. Rather, O God, let me entertain a mean Opinion of myſelf, and, with Readineſs, embrace whatever is an Humiliation to me; and, if Nature be un-

eaſy, let me remember this is nothing but Pride, and that to make this bend is one of the beſt Sacrifices I can offer to Thee. How many, O Jeſus, have been the Sins of my Pride! Grant, I may now make no more Additions to them, but, by the Practice of all Kinds of Humility, endeavour to cancel their Guilt.

O Jeſus, who, by thy Apoſtle, haſt aſſured us, that God reſiſteth the Proud, and gives Grace to the Humble; and that he has choſen the Things which are deſpiſed: Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may ſeek thy Grace in that Way which I have learned from Thee, to be moſt effectual for obtaining it. Grant, I may embrace all the Occaſions of Humility, as the beſt Expedients of Grace. Grant I may never be troubled at what is ſo much for my Intereſt; but he contented to be humbled. And, as for all the Suggeſtions and Contrivances of Pride, O God, may I be faithful in reſiſting them; ſince, however agreeable Pride is to Nature, I have thy Word for it, that, by Pride, I ſhall make Thee my Enemy. Wherefore I aſk of Thee, O bleſſed Redeemer, who didſt humble thyſelf to Death, even the Death of the Croſs, that Thou ſhew this Mercy to thy Servant, as to give me a truly humble Spirit; ſuch a Spirit as neither Nature, the World, nor Practice of Men ſhall be able to lead into the Ways of Pride: Such a Spirit as may conduct me in thy Ways: And, what are thy Ways, O Jeſus, but the Ways of Humility, and not of Pride?

Good



Good Uſe of SUND

O Merciful Lord, who haſt ordained a Day to be kept holy, that on it Man might pay ſovereign Homage to Thee, his Creator, praiſe and adore thy holy Name, and employ it in ſuch other pious Exerciſes, as might be moſt helpful for his eternal Good: Grant, that I, thy Creature, and the Work of thy Hands, may be ſolicitous in the Obſervance of this thy holy Ordinance, ſo as to anſwer all thoſe Purpoſes for which it was appointed, to the Glory of thy Name, and the everlaſting Good of my Soul.

For this End I moſt heartily implore thy Grace, to preſerve or deliver me from thoſe many Ways by which this Day is abuſed by Sloth and ill Cuſtom, or profaned by Irreligion and Vice. Thou haſt expreſly forbidden, O Lord, on this Day, all ſervile Labour, both to Man and Beaſt, that ſo Man, reſting from his uſual Labour, might have the better Opportunity for attending to the greater Duties then preſcribed. This is thy expreſs Order, O God, and I confeſs the Mercy of the Appointment. Grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may be ever careful in obſerving it; that I may neither work myſelf, nor require it of others, but only ſo far as Neceſſity demands it. Let not Intereſt prevail on me to tranſgreſs theſe

Bounds; ſince no Gain can be lawful, when the Work is a Violation of thy Precept.

Let no Sort of Curioſity, Pride, Niceneſs, Vanity, or Appetite ſo far prevail, as to take up that Time which ought to be better employed. Theſe, at the beſt, are great Weakneſſes, and how often are they ſinful? What a Sacrilege then muſt it be, to take away that Time which God has conſecrated to himſelf and to his Service, and to give it to theſe! O God, I ſee an Injuſtice in this, I acknowledge it to be prophane; and I beſeech Thee to preſerve me by thy Grace, that I fall not under this provoking Impiety.

Grant likewiſe, O God, that the ſame ill Principles may not be Motives to me, for employing others beyond what Neceſſity requires, and ſo robbing them of that Time which thy Mercy has deſigned them for the Good of their Souls. I confeſs it a particular Effect of thy Goodneſs towards ſuch poor Souls, as labour all the Week, to command a Reſt on this Day, that ſo on it they may labour for Heaven. And I muſt confeſs it a great Wickedneſs in me, if I permit my Humour, or Self-love, to be the Diſappointment of this thy Goodneſs, and to ſet them at work when Thou haſt commanded them to be at Reſt from my Service, and be at Leiſure for thine.

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, that, on theſe Days, I may not hearken to my Inclinations, in ſetting others to unneceſſary Work;

Work; but that I may concur with the Mercy of this Inſtitution, and contrive how to find Leiſure for all; that ſo I may be a Hindrance to none, in partaking of the Benefit of thy Goodneſs. There is ſome Buſineſs cannot be excuſed on this Day; but can none of that be excuſed which I require to be done? Is all that neceſſary which is not done for Neceſſity, but only in Compliance with my Ways, and to pleaſe me? I fear, when all comes to be examined, it will not be ſo judged. Conſider then this Matter well, and leave it not to Cuſtom or Inclination to be the Judge. See what thou canſt abate of what is uſually done. See where would be the Injury if ſuch Things were omitted: And if there be any Difficulty, whether it would not be a Charity in Thee, to ſuffer ſuch a Trouble for their Good who are under thy Care. Conſider, contrive, and ſubmit to ſome Inconvenience for thoſe, the Account of whoſe Souls will be demanded in Part of Thee. Grant, O God, I may do thus. Grant, that I may be willing to relinquiſh my own Ways, where Charity calls for it, and when it is in favour of thy Commandments.

I aſk likewiſe thy Grace, O God, that, on this Day, I may not indulge myſelf in Sleep and Sloth; for altho' Thou haſt commanded a Reſt from Labour; yet this cannot be interpreted in favour of Lazineſs; for this would be to make Thee concur to my Corruption and Sin. Thy Goodneſs has

has a much better Deſign, and I implore thy Aſſiſtance, that my Endeavours may be directed to the ſame End; that, on this Day, I may take large Steps towards Heaven, and, inſtead of favouring, may oppoſe all that which would be my Hindrance in this Way.

One of theſe Hindrances is Sloth; for this ties up the Hands, and cramps all the Powers of the Soul; and ſuch an Enemy it is to thy Service, that, if I accuſtom myſelf to yield to it, I am fully perſuaded I cannot long continue faithful to Thee. Grant therefore, I beſeech Thee, O Lord, that, on a Day when Thou calleſt me towards Heaven, I may not be ſo ungrateful to Thee, and ſo forgetful of my own Good, as then to give myſelf to the Conduct of ſuch treacherous Guides as lead infinite Numbers into Hell. And, are not Sloth and Self-love ſuch Guides? Permit me not, O Lord, I beſeech Thee, to yield to them. Let me not ſleep away the Day, which, being ſanctified by Thee, ought to be likewiſe ſanctified by me, and not idly conſumed in Sloth.

Beſides Sloth, I aſk of Thee, O Lord, thy Grace, that I may reſiſt all other idle Inclinations on this Day; that I may not loſe it in unprofitable Converſation, in Entertainments, in prophane Books, in Viſits, in Vanity, much leſs in ſuch Company as encourage Intemperance, or betray ſuch an Indiſpoſition of Soul, as to make that their Diverſion which is ſinful, and involves the Contempt of thy holy Will. Grant me, O Lord,

Lord, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, this Grace. For how unhappy muſt I otherwiſe be, if, thro' my Fault, I loſe the Advantage of this Day, and not only loſe it, but, by wretchedly prophaning what Thou haſt ſanctified, provoke thy Judgments againſt me!

Give me not over, O merciful God, to this reprobate Senſe, but graciouſly preſerve in me a ſincere Reſpect for every Thing that is holy; ſince I am very ſenſible, that to loſe Reſpect for what Thou thyſelf haſt ſet apart and ſanctified, is within one Step of deſpiſing Thee. Wherefore I beſeech Thee, that I may never fall into this Sin, but be ever afraid of it as of Hell; may I ever honour thy Mercies, and have a grateful Senſe of thy infinite Goodneſs to Man, and, in particular, of this holy Inſtitution, ſo far as to be afraid, not only of abuſing, but even of neglecting it. For this End, as I have hitherto implored thy Goodneſs, to deliver me from all Prophanations of this Day; ſo now I moſt humbly petition for thy Grace, that I may duly perform all the Obligations of it.

And, in the firſt Place, let it be the Effect of thy Grace, O God, in me, that I be never wanting, through my Fault, at thy publick Worſhip on this Day. Give me both a Deſire and Zeal for performing this Duty, that whereas Man, for himſelf, and all other Creatures, is bound to acknowledge and worſhip Thee his Creator, ſovereign Lord and merciful Benefactor, I may be ever forward in paying

paying this Homage of Adoration, Praiſe, and Thankſgiving, and do it in the moſt ſolemn Manner I can; ſo to anſwer, in our poor Way, the Glory of thy infinite Power and Goodneſs, and rejoicing in publick Aſſemblies, to ſee thy Creatures met together to give Thee Worſhip, who art the Lord of all.

But then, O Lord, I beg thy Grace, that, as often as I come into theſe publick Aſſemblies, it may be with ſuch inward Diſpoſition of Soul as may fit me for the Duties of ſuch a Meeting, in giving Glory to thy holy Name, and ſeeking thy Mercy both for myſelf and all others that want it. Grant therefore, I beſeech Thee, O merciful Lord, that I may not go out of Cuſtom only, and without thinking, or becauſe it is expected; but that I may ever propoſe thy Glory, and the ſatisfying that Duty to which thy Goodneſs has obliged me. And this, O God, may I perform with an humble Mind, with a fervent Spirit, with a Soul raiſed to Thee, zealous for thy Glory, confiding in thy Mercies, and thirſting after the Poſſeſſion of Thee, its only and everlaſting Good.

For this End, vouchſafe me, O Lord, thy Grace, that, being in thy Preſence, I may be watchful over myſelf, that I give no Offence to any, but do all to Edification. Suffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to carry any Vanity with me, nor do any Thing to draw the

the Eyes of others upon me; let it be my only Deſire, when I come before Thee, to be ſeen and heard by Thee alone, my God. May my Heart and Deſires be only fixed on Thee; and let this inward Steadineſs keep my Eyes from all Gazing; for, what have I to do with Creatures when I preſent myſelf a Petitioner to Thee?

Let a like Guard be on my Lips, that in the Houſe of Prayer I may ſpeak to none but Thee, my Lord. Far be then from me all vain, ſinful, worldly, or unprofitable Diſcourſe. Let my whole Behaviour be compoſed, reſerved, and modeſt; ſhewing no Favour to Sloth, nor ſeeking Eaſe, but attended with the Humility of a Petitioner, and a Reverence becoming the Majeſty of Thee, my God. Let nothing I do there be tainted with Hypocriſy, Vain-glory, or any human Reſpect; for this, I know, muſt be an Affront to Thee, and a great Prejudice to my Soul, to ſeek my own Glory in thy Houſe, and where I pretend to glorify Thee.

But, above all, I beſeech Thee to ſtrengthen my Soul, at this Time, againſt all ſinful Paſſions. Deliver me from all evil Suggeſtions; and if any, for my Trial, occur, let thy holy Grace be my Defence, ſo as to ſecure me againſt the Malice of them. O God, poſſeſs my Soul with an Abhorrence of all thoſe Looks, Words, or Motions, which can be ſuſpected of Lightneſs, and therefore are not only unbecoming, but muſt likewiſe give Scandal to as many as obſerve them.

For,

For, if at ſuch a Time, and in ſuch a Place, I ſo far yield to my own wicked Paſſions, as openly to encourage, or concur in what is ſinful, what muſt I expect from thy Hand but the ſevereſt of Judgments, whilſt I ſacrilegiouſly prophane thy Houſe, inſolently affront Thee to thy Face, and am actually in the Devil's Service, while I pretend to worſhip Thee? Preſerve me, O God, I beſeech Thee, from ſuch Abomination, and let the Fear of thy Judgments keep me from taking Part in their Sins, who make the Worſhip of Chriſtians more provoking than the Idolatry of Heathens.

Beſides the publick Worſhip, help me, O merciful God, in the due Performance of all other Exerciſes which are proper for ſanctifying the Day. Give me Grace not only to be attentive, but likewiſe to improve from whatever Inſtructions I ſhall hear. Let me not be drawn away by Curioſity, nor by Affection, nor the Ear, nor deſpiſe good Doctrine upon Diſlike of the Deliverer; but let thy Word, like good Seed, whoever the Sower be, take deep Root in my Soul, and bring forth Fruit an Hundred Fold. I cannot hope for this good Effect, but through the Help of thy Grace, by which my Heart muſt be prepared both for receiving and retaining what is good. Prepare then my Heart, O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may receive the Benefit of whatever I hear.

I pe-

I petition likewiſe, O God, for thy Grace, that, on this Day, I may not only read, but likewiſe take Delight in reading ſuch Books as may be for my Inſtruction, or otherwiſe a Help to me, in order to my eternal Good. I am ſenſible how much my Soul ſtands in need of ſuch Helps, and therefore beg of Thee, that neither Sloth, nor any Diſlike of ſuch Entertainment, may deprive me of this Food and Light of my Soul.

Let thy Grace likewiſe direct me to employ this Day in ſuch other Exerciſes, as may be for my ſpiritual Good. May thy Grace take me from Company, unprofitable Converſation, *&c.* and lead me to my Cloſet, there in private to converſe with Thee, my God, in Prayer: There to engage thy Goodneſs to my Aſſiſtance; and to obtain whatever Light and Strength I want, for overcoming myſelf and the World, and living up to the Rules of the Goſpel.

By the ſame Guide may I be prevailed on, in ſome Retirement, to conſider the State of my Soul, and, examining into the common Method of my Life, ſee whether the Commandments of God, and the Goſpel, are the Rule by which I endeavour to live; or whether Vice, Paſſion, Intereſt, Idleneſs, Self-love, or the World, carry me on in ſuch Ways, Practices, and Cuſtoms, as are not conſiſtent with the Rule I profeſs to follow.

By the ſame Guide may I be directed, inſtead of idle Company or Viſits, to ſeek a Conference with ſuch an one, whoſe Virtue, Piety,

Piety, and Charity may qualify him for being a Help to me: I know, how eaſy I am in deceiving myſelf; how blind in not diſcerning many Snares, which my own Corruption, the Devil, and the World lay for me; how raſh in going on in dangerous Ways, and preſuming many Things to be harmleſs and warrantable, which are not. Being thus unſafe under my own Conduct, I think nothing can be more for my Advantage, than to lay open the State of my Life, and confer with ſuch a Perſon, who is capable both of diſcerning my falſe Steps, and giving me Advice, how I may walk in ſafer Ways. And how much more to the Purpoſe, O God, is this, than to waſte this ſacred Time in Idleneſs? Grant, therefore, I beſeech Thee, that on a Day, which Thou haſt commanded to be ſanctified, I may take ſuch Methods, as may be moſt proper for my Sanctification.

Let the ſame Grace likewiſe direct me, to make my Peace with Thee: So that, as often as this Day returns, I may make this one Buſineſs of the Day, to conſider my Sins, and to repent of them. My Sins are the only Things that divide me from Thee, my God, and put me in Danger of being eternally ſeparated. What therefore can I better do, on this Day, ſet apart for Heaven, but thus labour in removing theſe Obſtacles, and, by rtue Contrition, endeavour to prepare my Soul for that Place of eternal Reſt; that ſo, whatever Week is to be my laſt, and in which I am

am to be ſummoned to give an Account, I may not be found unprepared.

By the Power of the ſame Grace may I be led to other ſuch pious Exerciſes, as may be moſt acceptable to Thee, in order to my future Good. Thou haſt manifeſted thy Acceptance of all Works of Mercy; of viſiting the Sick, comforting the Poor and Afflicted, inſtructing the Ignorant, relieving the Diſtreſſed, *&c.* And I cannot deny, but ſome of theſe Objects I might find every *Sunday* in the Year. Grant then, O God, that I may be ſo true to my own beſt Intereſt, and to the Deſign of this thy Ordinance, as to withdraw myſelf, on this Day, from whatever can be cenſured as unprofitable, and that, in theſe better Exerciſes, I may ſeek thy Favour, and help to ſanctify the Day. How many Hours have I waſted unprofitably! May I now, for the future, be ſolicitous to employ them better.

Mercifully give Ear, O Lord, I beſeech Thee, to theſe my Petitions, and vouchſafe to grant my Requeſts; for, behold I find my Soul in great Diſorder, and ſubject to many Weakneſſes, ſuch as require both thy holy Grace, and my ſtricter Care for their Amendment. How little do I know, what it is to love Thee? How am I bent upon worldly Things, and how little concerned for what is eternal! I am eager in every Thing that is to pleaſe myſelf: But how ſlothful and dull in all the Exerciſes that are for my ſpiritual Good? How do I make the World my

my Rule, while I pretend to follow the Goſpel? How little is the Senſe I have of all thy Mercies? And how unworthy do I abuſe thy manifold Bleſſings? How great is the Number of my Sins; and, while I often pretend to repent, how little do I amend? Nay, whether I have ever truly repented of any one Sin, is only known to Thee, O God.

While thus ſtands the State of my Soul, (beſides the Foulneſs of my greater Crimes) how unhappy muſt I be, if, by the Help of thy Grace, I do not make a good Uſe of Days, which Thou haſt ſanctified? For it is on theſe Days, Thou in a particular Manner calleſt upon me; Thou putteſt me in Mind of the eternal *Sabbath*, of reſting with Thee in thy Kingdom; Thou encourageſt me to prepare for it, and giveſt me Opportunities both of conſidering my State, and of engaging thy infinite Goodneſs to my Aſſiſtance, for overcoming whatever Difficulties ſtand in my Way. Now, this being thy Mercy towards me, what Hopes can I have, if I neglect this Mercy; if, having ſo much to do on theſe Days, I let them ſlip away, and, inſtead of complying with the Deſign of thy Goodneſs, waſte them either ſinfully or unprofitably; ſo that the Difficulties of my Salvation are even then encreaſed, when they ought to be diminiſhed, and, when I am called upon to prepare for Heaven, I then depart at a yet greater Diſtance from it?

Wherefore now, O God, I beſeech Thee, to have Mercy on me, and give me Grace to be

ſerious

ſerious in a Matter of this great Concern. I own thy great Mercy in the Inſtitution of this Day; I own the great Intereſt I have in obſerving it, and that no leſs than my Eternity depends upon it. Grant therefore, moſt gracious Lord, that I may no more prophane this Day by any Thing that is ſinful, nor abuſe it through Sloth, nor neglect it through Indifferency; but that I may be faithful in performing all the Duties of it, and wiſe in making all that Advantage which Thou haſt deſigned for the Good of my Soul. May I make it my Buſineſs, on this Day, to ſtudy the Way to Heaven, and to advance in it: May I learn to know myſelf, and ſee whether I uſe ſufficient Means for overcoming that Corruption which puts me out of the Way of Heaven. And ſince this Day is an Emblem of the everlaſting Reſt in thy Kingdom, may I, on this Day, endeavour to withdraw my Heart from the World, and, by exerciſing it in Adoration and Love, labour to be united to Thee, with whom I deſire to be united for ever. *Amen.*

Good Uſe of TIME.

I Believe, O Lord, that I was not created for this World, but for a better; that I am to enter into Eternity, and that the Time and Being, I have in this World, is granted me, to prepare for that everlaſting State which is to come. This is my Faith, and I now implore thy Grace, that my Faith may

may be manifeſted in the Method of my Life, that I may live ſo here as one that earneſtly deſires and ſtrongly hopes to have a happy Eternity.

According to this Faith, I confeſs, O Lord, there can be nothing more unreaſonable than to paſs thro' this Life without providing for the next. For, what is this Life, in Compariſon of Eternity? It is not ſo much as one Drop to the Ocean; it is but a Moment; it is nothing. Eternity is an everlaſting Being, which can never end; when ten Thouſand, and ten Hundred Thouſand Years are paſt, Eternity is ſtill the ſame, it is all yet to come. But as for this Life, a few Years certainly end it; a few Days may conclude it; and there is no Certainty of one Moment beyond the preſent. If there be this Difference, ſo there ought to be in the Care of providing for them; and it is not only unreaſonable, but even Madneſs, to be ſolicitous for this Life, without making due Proviſion for the next.

Preſerve me, O God, I beſeech Thee, from this ſtrange Blindneſs; and, ſince it has been thy Mercy to me, to grant me *Reaſon* and *Faith*, extend now this Mercy to me, and vouchſafe me thy Grace, that, having the Help of theſe two great Lights, I may not ſtifle them both, but be wholly directed by them; and particularly in this Point of letting Eternity have the beſt Part of my Care, and being more ſolicitous for an everlaſting Well-being, than for that which paſſes like a Dream, and laſts only for a Moment.

What

What if I had all I can deſire in this Life? What an imperfect Happineſs would this be, when every Day paſſing would inform me, that my Life paſſed with it; when the Death of every Acquaintance would tell me, that I had nothing certain in all my Enjoyments; that my Hour would likewiſe come, when I ſhould be torn from all whatever I admired; that I ſhould never more return, but enter into Eternity, where, giving an Account of my Life, I ſhould receive the Puniſhment due to my Sins, and, for my Contempt of God, become the everlaſting Scorn of Devils?

I know my Hour is already appointed; and the Sentence of Death is paſſed upon me, and the very Moment fixed, in which it ſhall be certainly executed without Reprieve. What then is my preſent Life, but the Life of one who is ſentenced to die? And, while I am every Day haſtening on towards Death, what can all my preſent Happineſs be, but like the Satisfaction of Condemn'd Perſons on their Way to Execution? And is this a Happineſs for which Eternity is to be neglected, or that by reaſonable Creatures can be pe put in the Ballance againſt everlaſting Bliſs?

Permit me not, O God, I beſeech Thee, to fall undee the Folly and Guilt of this Stupidity; but grant, that being placed here in this World, to prepare for the World to come, I may ſtudy, contrive, and labour for the Happineſs of the next Life, and not do any Thing here, for which I ſhall be in Hazard of being excluded from it.

For

For this End, I beg of Thee, moſt merciful God, to deliver me from a lazy, ſlothful, and idle Life: For I know the Work of Eternity cannot go on, while I am doing nothing, and whatever Time I give to Sloth is ſo much taken away from my greater Concern. I confeſs, the working out my Salvation is not an eaſy Taſk, and I have many Things to do, which require both Conſideration, Labour, and Time; and, if they be not done, I have too much Reaſon to fear a Miſcarriage. What a ſtrange Indiſcretion then muſt it be, to let the preſent Time be waſted in Sloth, and defer the Work of Eternity to another Time, which I know not, whether I ſhall ever have, or, if I have it, whether I ſhall be in Circumſtances of making uſe of it or not!

There is not any Part of Time given to Idleneſs, but what might be employed for the Service of Eternity; I might be praying, reading, taking Care of, inſpecting, or labouring in the Buſineſs of my State: I might be improving myſelf or others; I might be reſiſting Idleneſs, at leaſt; which would be a great Help in all that concerns Eternity. Grant then, O God, that I may not yield to this unhappy Inclination, and lie quite ſtill, doing nothing, when I have ſo much to do.

Ah, wretched Soul! look upon thyſelf, and ſee, Whether Thou art fit to enter into Eternity, if God ſhould ſummon thee out of this World, now at this Moment. Is thy Peace made with God? Haſt thou repented of all thy paſt Sins? Haſt thou repented from thy Heart? Art not thou yet ſubject

to ſome ſinful Practices? Are there not yet ſome criminal Paſſions in Thee, not yet ſubdued? Is thy Heart diſengaged from the World, from all its Buſineſs, Intereſt, and Flatterers, ſo that thou couldſt now at this Moment leave it? Doſt thou love God above all Things? Is it thy conſtant Practice to renounce thy own Inclinations, and to forſake Company, as often as theſe lead thee contrary to the known Will of God, and put thee in Danger of offending him? Doſt thou deſpiſe the World, with all its Greatneſs and Pleaſures? Doſt thou eſteem them Vanity, and haſt thou a Deſire of coming to the Poſſeſſion of God, as thy only Good? Doſt thou do all thy Duty belonging to this World? Is there nothing under thy Care, that ſuffers through thy Neglect, ill Management, and want of being more induſtrious?

Speak now the Truth, and diſſemble not: Upon this ſhort Enquiry, doſt not thou ſee thyſelf at preſent unprepared for entering into Eternity, and that thou haſt yet much to do? And is this a Time then for lying ſtill, for ſpending thy Hours in Sleep and Drowſineſs, for ſitting with thy Arms croſſed, and letting vain Amuſements conſume both thy Time and Thoughts; Is this a Time for waſting thy Days in idle Entertainments, in wandering about, like one that is at a Loſs for want of ſomething to do?

God knows thy many Sins, and the great Corruptions to which thou art ſubject; he knows them, and grants thee this preſent Time, that in it thou mayſt take Pains in

overcoming all Evil, and put thyself in a better State. This is his Mercy, that, at the Hour of Death, thou mayst not be found unprepared for leaving this World, and taking Possession of a better. And is this a Time, wherein thou, who art a reasonable Creature, and a Christian, canst think thou hast nothing to do? Is this a Time for thee to throw away idly, and even to study, how thou mayst find something unprofitable, wherein to waste it? God mercifully providing Time, wherein thou mayst work out thy Salvation; and thou, who art the Person most concerned, contriving how to lose it!

Ah, my God, I see my Folly, and I know it must be a great Provocation to Thee, to see thy Goodness thus abused. Thy Goodness waits for my Amendment; and what do I, but, by my incredible Neglect, treasure up to myself Anger in the Day of Wrath? But since thy Grace, O God, now touches my Heart, and gives me a Glimpse of my own Unhappiness, grant, that, for the Time to come, I may take a better Method; grant I may often reflect on thy Mercy towards me, in the Time Thou givest me here on Earth; grant I may often think of the great and difficult Work I have to do; and likewise contrive how to labour in it, and carry it on every Day of my Life.

For this End, I now most humbly ask thy Grace, that I may resolutely withstand all Inclinations to Laziness; that I may shake off all Sloth and Heaviness, with every Oppres-

sion

ſion that weighs upon my Spirit. Quicken me, I beſeech Thee, and give me new Life, that, having the Work of Eternity upon my Hands, I may be induſtrious in it; and every Day do ſomething that may ſet it forward. For Sloth, I know, is a great Temptation, and the Devil needs lay no other Snare for thoſe, who favour a lazy and idle Temper; for this alone overthrows the beſt Purpoſes that can be made, and prepares the Way for infinite Sins. Help me therefore, O God, and by thy Power deliver me from this evil Spirit, which, ſeeming innocent, opens the Heart to the fouleſt of Devils.

Hear me, O merciful Lord, and receive the Petition I now make Thee. For I ſee ſo much of Blindneſs, Unreaſonableſs, Stupidity, and Madneſs, in being thus ſlothful, when everlaſting Happineſs is yet to be gained, that I cannot expect thy Grace or Bleſſing as long as I indulge myſelf in this unhappy Inclination. For how can thy Mercy, O God, extend to thoſe, who, having Heaven offered them at ſo eaſy a Rate, are not yet willing to take the Pains for it, who having a few Years to labour in, and an Eternity wherein to reſt, accept not this Condition of Mercy, but, inverting thy Order, ſeek Reſt here, without any Solicitude for the Eternity that is to follow.

When I conſider thy only Son, and the Example he has ſet before us, I ſee no Encouragement given to ſlothful Chriſtians. For what was his whole Life, but a Life of Labour, a Life of continual Application, in ſeek-

ing the loſt Sheep, in teaching the Way of Salvation, in relieving the Diſtreſſed, in comforting repenting Sinners, in reproaching the Obſtinate, in awaking the Slothful, in faſting, in ſpending whole Nights in Prayer, in ſuffering all Manner of Injuries, both in his good Name, in his Perſon, in his Doctrine, in his Life! This was what he choſe, not only for reſcuing us from the Power of Death, as a Redeemer; but likewiſe for our Inſtruction and Example, as a Maſter and Leader; commanding all to learn of him, and by his Apoſtle informing all his Followers, that the Life of Chriſt ought to be manifeſted in them, and to work out their Salvation in Fear and Trembling.

Here now is Encouragement, and even a Command for Chriſtians to labour in the Work of Salvation; and Promiſes enough are made to thoſe that do ſo. But where is the Hope or Encouragement for thoſe that are ſlothful? Chriſt ſhewed ſuch Love for the Salvation of Man, and eſteemed it ſo valuable, that for this End he ſubjected himſelf to ſo painful and laborious a Life; to ſo cruel, ignominious, and tormenting a Death: But thou, Chriſtian, who waſteſt thy Life in Idleneſs, and wilt not take Pains in working out thy own Salvation; whoſe Diſciple art thou, and where are thy Hopes? If thou takeſt no Part with him, how canſt thou expect to have any Part in him?

Chriſt ſought no Reſt for himſelf, and purpoſely declined all thoſe Ways, by which Softneſs, Self-love, and Eaſe are indulged; and

and all his Life was divided between the Labours of Juſtice, Charity, Humility, and Patience. But thou, Chriſtian, who art not only averſe to all ſuch Labours, but likewiſe in favour of Inclination, doſt purpoſely decline them; thou, who ſtudieſt thy own Eaſe, who art wholly under the Conduct of Sloth and Self-love, who turneſt all the Bleſſings of God, thy Thoughts, thy Health, thy Time, thy Money, to the Support of this thy Corruption; thou Chriſtian, who doſt this, whoſe Diſciple art thou? Where canſt thou ground thy Hope of reigning with Chriſt in Glory, who wilt not join with him in his Labours, or walk in the Way he has taught, both by his Doctrines and Example?

The Caſe is very plain, that Chriſt has promiſed to welcome thoſe into his eternal Joys, who are careful to prepare for his coming, who provide againſt that Time, and are found watching; and for this End he gives a ſtrict Charge to all his Followers, to be ever watching. And is not the Caſe as clear, what ſhall be their Doom, who give themſelves to Sleep and Sloth, when they ſhould be providing Oil in their Lamps; and, for want of being more watchful, are found unprepared at the coming of the Spouſe? The Gate is ſhut againſt them, and Chriſt knows them not. O God, deliver me in thy Mercy from this Unhappineſs. I confeſs, Thou haſt given Hopes of Bliſs to ſuch as are careful in the great Concern of Eternity. But, as for others, if they have Hopes of Mercy, it is what Thou

haſt never promiſed. May my Hope, O God, be ever ſuch as is built on thy Promiſes.

It is plain again, that the Servant, who induſtriouſly employed to his Maſter's Advantage the Talents received from him, found the bountiful Reward of his Labour and Care. As likewiſe that the Tree, which brought forth Fruit, was commended by the Lord, and permitted to grow in his Vineyard. But what becomes of the Servant who made no Uſe of his Talent? And what of the Tree which brought forth no Fruit? The one is caſt forth, with the Character of an unprofitable Servant, into utter Darkneſs; and the other is cut down, and commanded to be thrown into the Fire.

Under theſe Parables, O God, Thou manifeſteſt thy Judgments, and diſcovereſt to thy Servants, how they may eſcape them. Thou ſheweſt to me the Recompence of an induſtrious and laborious Spirit, and calleſt upon me to be afraid of Sloth, which is with ſuch Rigour judged by Thee. Poſſeſs my Soul, O God, with the lively Remembrance of this important Truth. May the Knowledge of thy Judgments chaſe from my Heart all Oppreſſion and Heavineſs; and may I have the ſame Horror of an idle Life as of Hell. If I make not a good Uſe of the Talents and Bleſſings, and improve them not in my Maſter's Service, my Lot is already caſt; for the unprofitable Servant is already condemned. If I live an idle Life, and bring not forth Fruit of what I have received, Sen-

tence

tence is already pronounced in the Barren Tree. O God, give me now the Grace of an active Spirit, that I may ſtudy how to make uſe of thy Bleſſings, and particularly of my Time, that I may be found bringing forth Fruit, and be tranſplanted hence into thy heavenly Vineyard.

I have great Reaſon to preſs this Petition to Thee again, O God, becauſe I ſee the Evidence of thy Judgments, even in this Life, upon thoſe, who, prodigal of their Time, let it be conſumed by Sloth and Idleneſs. For how great Numbers do I find of theſe, following very unchriſtian Ways, engaged in Variety of Extravagancies, laughing at Religion, fond of atheiſtical and prophane Company, without Diſcipline, Admirers of all that is vain and prodigal, and living on ſo unmindful of Thee, and forgetful of Eternity, as if they were wholly caſt off by Thee, and given up to a reprobate Senſe? A long Train of Evils are ſo generally the Attendants of an idle Life, that I cannot but fear this to be their Caſe; and therefore, knowing how much this is to be dreaded, I implore thy holy Grace for my Protection, beſeeching Thee ſo to encreaſe this Dread, that I may be afraid of all Inclinations to Sloth, and be as ſolicitous to caſt them off, as the fouleſt of all Temptations. For have not I Reaſon to fear, when I ſee myſelf running into the Way where ſo many periſh; where Perſons are no ſooner entered, but they become blind and ſenſeleſs, as to the Apprehenſion of

Danger, bold in deſpiſing what they apprehend, and making little other Uſe of their Reaſon, but finding Reaſons to deceive themſelves, and for going on without Scruple in ſuch Ways, as cannot be warranted any longer, than they are their own Judges? Deliver me therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, from this unhappy State.

For how can it be otherwiſe than unhappy, amidſt the infinite Difficulties and Dangers of this Life, which are ſo very great, that the moſt watchful, induſtrious, and ſolicitous Chriſtians overcome them not, but with frequent Hazards of being overcome by them? And what then muſt become of thoſe that are ſlothful and idle? Are not theſe moſt likely to periſh, where the others hardly eſcape? I confeſs, O God, that Nature and the World are ſo very corrupt, and the Devil is ſo maliciouſly induſtrious, that it requires a continual Watchfulneſs, to ſtand againſt them, and whoever ſtands not thus, muſt, without a Miracle, become a Prey to them. Grant therefore, O God, that I may be ever upon the Guard, as the unhappy Circumſtances of this Life require: Grant, I may be ever ſolicitous to procure thy Aſſiſtances for my Security; and mercifully preſerve me from yielding to the Inclinations of Careleſneſs, Idleneſs, and Sloth: For while theſe help conſiderably to encreaſe the Dangers of my State, expoſe me more to them, and provoke Thee, to withdraw thy Help from me; what muſt my Condition be, but full

full of Deſpair, if by Grace I am not delivered from theſe Evils.

Deliver me therefore, O God, and give me that Grace, by which I may be taught and helped to make a good Uſe of my Time: Permit me, no more to conſume it ſinfully, or waſte it unprofitably; but ſince Heaven is to be purchaſed by it, teach me, I beſeech Thee, ſo to employ it, that whether I work, read, think, eat, drink, ſleep, or divert myſelf, it may be all ſo ordered, as to be acceptable to Thee, and advance me on to that laſt End, for which I was created.

Let my Conſcience always lie under this Conviction; that Idleneſs is either ſinful or dangerous, and ſo unbecoming a Chriſtian, that I ought to think it a Reproach, to be ſo found: And therefore that I ought to be employed: And for my Employment, O God, grant, that I be ever diligent in that which belongs to my State. If Neceſſity obliges me to none, I beg thy Direction, that Diſcretion may; that ſo I may never be idle.

As for my Employment, may it be always in a lawful Way. Let thy Grace always direct me, to undertake it in thy Name, O God; may I begin it in Obedience to thy holy Will, and make a continual Offering of it to thy Glory; that ſo it may not be only an Employment of my Time, and contribute to my worldly Intereſt, but likewiſe to my eternal.

As for Divertiſements; may thy holy Grace direct me, to go ſo far, as ſhall be neceſſary

for Health, or for giving due Releaſe to tired Spirits. So far, O God, they are permitted by Thee, and may be undertaken in Obedience to thy holy Will, and become an acceptable Offering. But then, O God, I muſt humbly beſeech Thee, ſuffer me not to make Divertiſements the Buſineſs of the Day, and much leſs of my Life. Thou haſt engaged me in a noble Work, even the gaining of Heaven, and haſt made it my greateſt Intereſt to be induſtrious in it; and, while I have Heaven to gain, can it be reaſonable for me to play away my Life? The Work I have undertaken is to be carried on in the Middle of a corrupt World; it requires great Watchfulneſs, continual Care, Labour, and Self-denials; and, for want of theſe, the far greater Number miſcarry, and periſh for ever; and while ſo many fall on each Side of me, and are loſt eternally, for want of being more careful, can it be reaſonable in me to lay aſide Care, and ſpend my Life in Idleneſs? Suffer me not, O God, to live unconcerned, under the Guilt of this Folly.

But grant, that I may be moderate in Recreation, and avoid all Exceſs; and not only avoid it, but be always jealous of myſelf, for fear of being inſenſibly drawn in to more than becomes a Chriſtian, the great Loſs of that Time which Thou haſt given me for better Ends, and, when once gone, can never be recovered by all, whatever the World can do.

Grant likewiſe, that I may not delight, or ſeek to divert myſelf in ſuch Ways, as either become

become not my State, or put me in Danger of Sin. In this Point I beſeech Thee, O God, to give me Diſcretion, and to direct me, every Day, by thy holy Spirit; for I confeſs my Weakneſs and Overſights to be ſuch, that I have nothing in myſelf to truſt to. Help me therefore here, and let no Indiſcretion or Paſſion prevail upon me, to engage me in any Thing that is either ſinful or unbecoming. Let me do nothing that may be a Snare to me, or be the Occaſion of living in the Neglect of that Diſcipline, which is one of the greateſt Helps in a Chriſtian Life.

As for my Thoughts, I beſeech Thee, O God, that whatever Time is given to theſe, it may be in turning my Heart towards Thee, in ſeeking, loving, or praiſing Thee, or in ſuch other Conſiderations as my ſpiritual or temporal Concerns may require; all theſe may be in order to my laſt End, and therefore grateful to Thee. But againſt all other Thoughts, O God, be Thou my Protection. Protect me therefore, I beſeech Thee, againſt all ſinful Thoughts, againſt all the Workings and Contrivances of any Paſſion or immoderate Affection; againſt all Thoughts of Reſentments and Revenge; againſt all vain Jealouſies and Suſpicions; againſt all Thoughts of immoderate Grief, or melancholy and unreaſonable Fears; againſt all romantick Thoughts and impertinent Amuſements, and imaginary Deluſions. Againſt theſe, and whatever others there are, ſinful, dangerous, or vain, O God, be Thou my Protector; give me

Grace

Grace to be ever ſenſible of their Vanity, that I may never indulge or give them the leaſt Encouragement. May I be ever mindful, that all ſuch Thoughts ſteal away that Time, which might be better employed, even in gaining Eternity, and hence reject them with Indignation, as an Entertainment unworthy of thoſe, who have the Work of Eternity on their Hand, demanding their Conſideration and moſt ſerious Thoughts. Hear me, O moſt merciful Lord, and let me no more prodigally throw away that Time upon Impertinencies and Sin, which Thou haſt given me for a better End, and in which, if I do not employ it, I ſhall certainly be called to an Account for the Abuſe of ſo conſiderable a Talent.

Wherefore, I now moſt humbly petition for thy Grace, O moſt gracious Lord, that, inſtead of loſing, I may now learn to redeem the Time; it is too much I have already loſt. How much, O God, how much have I loſt in Sin? How much in Vanity, Curioſity, and Folly? How much in unprofitable Converſation? How much has Sloth, Idleneſs, and unneceſſary Sleep ſtolen away? How much has been caſt away in doing and thinking of nothing? Thus, O God, have I prodigally waſted my Time, and careleſly thrown it away, as if I had a Stock of it at Command, or had no better Uſe to which to put it.

But for all this ill Management, I now humble myſelf before Thee; I confeſs my Sin, and beſeech Thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive it. I ſee my great Folly,

and

and here acknowledge it with Sorrow, Shame, and Confuſion. And now beg thy Heavenly Aſſiſtance, that I may endeavour, in all Ways, to redeem my Time. Grant, I may ſeek in all Things to do thy holy Will, live always in thy Preſence, fear Sin, and all the Dangers of it, and every Day to make it my particular Concern to imploy my Time in ſuch a Way, not as Inclination or Nature ſuggeſts, but as ſeems moſt comformable to thy Law, moſt honourable to Thee, beneficial to my own Soul, and is capable of being accepted by Thee, in order to my eternal Good. Thus, O God, may I employ the Time that remains of my Life, and make it ſerviceable to Eternity. that ſo I may never come to that unhappy State of Curſing myſelf with everlaſting Woes, for my Folly, in abuſing that ſhort Time which was granted me for working out my Salvation.

Keep Peace with all.

I Here make my Profeſſion before Thee, O God, that I believe Thee to be a Lover of Peace; that Thou haſt commanded all to keep Peace with every Neighbour; and that, as Thou haſt threatened thoſe with thy ſevereſt Judgments who live in Strife and Diſſenſion, ſo Thou haſt encouraged thoſe, who make and live in Peace, with the Promiſe of the greateſt Bleſſings.

This I believe, and hence know, what my Duty is; but, O God, I muſt own my Weakneſs

Weakneſs too, that tho' Duty and Intereſt preſs ſtrongly upon me, yet I very often fail in this Point, and a little Occaſion is enough to carry me againſt all I know, ſo that I am often engaged in Diſſenſion, where Thou commandeſt Peace to be kept.

For the many Times I have offended in this Way, I now, with all Humility, implore thy Mercy; appealing to thy infinite Goodneſs for the Forgiveneſs of my Sins, whereby I have diſturbed my own and my Neighbour's Peace, given Scandal to others, and broken that Bond of Charity which Thou haſt commanded ſhould be kept inviolable amongſt Chriſtians. All theſe Iniquities I beſeech Thee now to forgive, and in a particular Manner to eſtabliſh me ſo in thy Grace, that I may chooſe rather to ſubmit to the greateſt Inconvenience, than offend againſt that Precept, wherein my eternal Intereſt is ſo much concerned.

This Grace of Peace I have Reaſon to aſk, becauſe I ſee the Strictneſs of thy Precept, wherein Thou commandeſt it, and the particular Manner in which Thou enjoined it. Thou haſt made it to be the Mark of thy Diſciples, to live in Peace and Love; for thus Thou haſt declared it; *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* O bleſſed Jeſus, ſince Thou haſt made this Declaration, there is no Place left to doubt; I muſt either keep Peace, or not pretend to be thy Diſciple. Help me therefore, O bleſſed Redeemer, and, amidſt all the Difficulties of Nature,

let

let me ſtill be mindful of the Terms upon which I ſtand. Let me ſuffer all, rather than loſe the Character of being thy Diſciple.

Thou haſt again given this Command to all thy Followers; *Follow Peace with all Men, and Holineſs:* And it ought to be enough for me, that Thou haſt commanded it; for, what elſe is my Profeſſion, but to know thy Will, and do it? But, when I ſee thy Precept of keeping Peace, backed with this following Threat, *Follow Peace with all Men, and Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*; what ſhall I do here, but ſtand in Surprize, and tremble at my own Weakneſs and Madneſs, who, upon ſuch trivial Occaſions, offend againſt this Command, as if there was nothing depending on it? Ah, my God, give me a greater Senſe of my Duty, and a more lively Apprehenſion of thy Threats, that what Thou judgeſt ſo ſeverely, I may not paſs by ſo lightly. Let the Sentence here pronounced be always in my Mind, that I may have a Dread upon me of all Quarrels, Strife, and Diſſention; and that, in all the Occaſions of them, I may rather chooſe to let them go in Silence, than, by yielding to my Paſſion, break that Peace on which my Eternity ſo much depends.

Thou haſt again, by the Apoſtle, informed us, that *Variance, Wrath*, and *Strife are Works of the Fleſh*; and that thoſe *who do ſuch Things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* In theſe plain Terms is thy holy Will declared to us; and Thou haſt mercifully let us know how deteſtable theſe Sins are to Thee, and how pernicious

nicious to the Sinner. And what then muſt I do? Am I now to follow the Inclination of my Nature, hearken to the Suggeſtions of my Temper or Paſſion, as a Heathen would do when he is provoked: Or, muſt I be directed by Thee, and, in my Obedience, ſhew that I have a Faith in thy Words? O God, the Caſe is evident what I ought to do; and, I fear, it is as plain what I have done; that I have as eaſily fallen into Paſſion, and, upon as light Occaſions, broken Peace with my Neighbour, as if I had no Knowledge of its being forbidden by Thee, and were not at all awed by thy Threats.

But now, O God of Mercy, I beſeech Thee to hear thy Servant, and grant me a better Spirit, that I may in all Things be directed by thy Law; that thy Will may be the Rule of my Life. And particularly, in this Point, that I may be careful to avoid all thoſe Evils upon which Thou haſt ſet ſuch a Mark of thy Diſpleaſure. Thou haſt ſaid it, *Variance*, *Wrath* and *Strife* exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven. Grant therefore, that I may be ever watchful againſt the Guilt of theſe Sins, and be as fearful of all the Occaſions of them, as of the fouleſt Crimes. For, what more can there be in the worſt of Sins, than to divide Souls from God, and ſhut them out from the Kingdom of Heaven?

But why do I pray to be delivered from theſe Sins? I know this Prayer is vain, if I do not make it my moſt ſerious Study to examine what the Meekneſs, what the Patience, what

what the Humility of a Chriſtian ought to be; and what is the Spirit by which he ought to live. This, therefore, O God, I deſire to learn. Teach me, I beſeech Thee, this Leſſon, that while I pray to be delivered from the Guilt of theſe common, but great Sins, I may be truly in earneſt, and omit nothing that is neceſſary for obtaining what I aſk. Speak therefore, O merciful Lord, to thy Servant; for I truly deſire to be taught by Thee.

Walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; With all Lowlineſs, and Meekneſs, with Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in Love: Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, (Epheſ. 4. 1, 2, 3.) I hear theſe thy ſacred Words, O God, and theſe are ſo many Commands to me, not to let Pride or Paſſion work in me, but even then to be meek and humble, when others give me Provocations to Anger; to ſuffer what I think injurious to me, and not only to ſuffer, but even with Long-ſuffering; and in Silence to forbear, when inward Diſturbance puſhes me on to lay open the Wrong in hard Words, and to juſtify myſelf in Paſſion: This is the Spirit, which, by thy Command, ought to govern in me. This Meekneſs, Patience, and Silence are according to the Vocation to which I am called; but, O God, how unlike is my Practice to this? Help me, O bleſſed Redeemer, and give me both Grace and Strength, that I may not only profeſs in Words, but live according to thy Goſpel.

Walk

Walk honeſtly, as in the Day——not in Strife and Envying, but put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. (Rom. xiii. 13.) Here again I have thy Command, O God, to avoid all Contention and Strife, and ſo to check all Kinds of Envy, as not to let this break forth into any biting or provoking Expreſſion. Grant, O merciful Lord, I may do thus, for certainly this has not been hitherto my Rule: How eaſily have I been engaged in Strife; upon how ſlight Occaſions have I been drawn into it, when a little Patience, a little Silence, a little Diſcretion might have prevented it? And how often has Envy made me open my Teeth againſt my Neighbour? Ah, my God! I have lived many Years under the Profeſſion of being thy Servant, without doing thy Will, or even knowing what it was. How long ſhall I thus go on? Be merciful now to me, and, by the Strength of thy Grace, take me out of the Ways of this Corruption, lead me on in the Ways of Peace, and, having put off the Old Man, help me to put on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work: But the Wiſdom, that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocriſy. (Jam. iii. 14.) Grant, O merciful Father, I may live in the Practice of this Leſſon; that I may not be harſh, paſſionate, exceptious, or eaſily provoked; for this is the Way to Strife, and Strife is followed by Confuſion, and every evil Work. So it is, Lord, I own and feel this

this Truth; for, as often as I am engaged in Strife, my Soul is in Confuſion; I am fit for no Part of my Duty, and I both ſpeak and do ſuch Things as a Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed of; diſcovering too plainly, that, while Paſſion governs, I neither love Thee, my God, nor fear Thee; I have no Regard either to thy Commands, or to thy Threats. Hence it is made evident to me, what thy Apoſtle here teaches; that Bitterneſs, Envying, and Strife, are not the Wiſdom which deſcends from Above, but are *Earthly*, *Senſual*, *Deviliſh*; for ſo I find it by the ill Effects they work in my Soul, in ſhutting out Reaſon and Faith, making me deaf to all that is for my Good, and opening my Underſtanding to nothing but what is ſinful. O God, may I follow no more this Wiſdom, which, being from the Devil, cannot lead to Thee, who alone art my preſent and everlaſting Good.

Rather, O bleſſed Redeemer, let me, for the future, follow the Wiſdom that is from Above. Teach me to be gentle in my Behaviour, meek in my Words, mild in my Voice, peaceable in my Anſwers. Fill me with Compaſſion towards all; that, whenever Paſſion diſturbs them, I may pity their Weakneſs, be troubled at their Sin, and, by all the Means of Moderation, Sweetneſs, and Mercy, endeavour to reſtore them to Peace. This is the Wiſdom of Heaven, even that which Thou, bleſſed Jeſus, didſt practiſe upon Earth; may this be my Rule, and ſo impartially towards all, that no Diſaffection, Diſlike, or Ill-will, may ever

ſo

ſo prevail in me as to tranſgreſs it. In this Method of Peace may this infirm Member be united to Thee its Head.

Have Compaſſion one of another: Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing; but contrariwiſe, Bleſſing; knowing, that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a Bleſſing. (1 Pet. 3. 8, 9.) Thus, O God, Thou teacheſt me the Way to Peace; and how ſhall I find Peace if I obſerve not what Thou teacheſt? Hear then, my Soul, what the Lord ſays to thee. When others injure thee, and thou ſuffereſt Evil from them, thy Lord lets thee know his Will, that, in this Caſe, thou art not to render Evil for Evil. And if others, in reviling and angry Words, expreſs their Paſſion againſt thee, that in this Caſe, thou art not to render Railing for Railing. However Nature therefore be provoked, and ſeems to ſwell with Gall; however common Practice encourages thee to reſent the Wrong; yet thy Lord commands thee to ſuppreſs thy Paſſion, and not only to be patient, but even to bleſs thoſe who are railing at Thee, and, by this Practice of heavenly Charity, to prevent Diſſenſion, and keep Peace. Nay, he not only commands this, but likewiſe declares, that this is the very Thing to which thou art called; it is thy Profeſſion to do thus, and the Means by which thou art to come to the Inheritance of an eternal Bleſſing.

Doſt thou hear now, my Soul, what thy Lord ſays to thee? My God, I hear it, and

and am ſurprized at myſelf to ſee how little my Life is conformed to thy Law, or rather, how contrary I live to it. For, is it not ſtrange, that, after Thou haſt manifeſted thy Will to us, in ſuch plain Terms, and annexed unſpeakable Bleſſings to the fulfilling thy Commands, I ſtill hearken to Nature, and am carried away by my Paſſion contrary to all Thou haſt ſaid, as much as if I had no Intereſt in obeying Thee, and were to be no Loſer by deſpiſing thy Commands?

O God, I am aſhamed, and quite confounded at my Contempt of thy Law; and, in this Confuſion of Spirit, I now humble myſelf before Thee, in Acknowledgment of all theſe my Sins, and beſeech Thee, my heavenly Father, to forgive them, and ſo to ſtrengthen me by thy Grace, that, whenever I am provoked by others, either by Words or Actions, I may ſtifle in myſelf all the Motions of Nature, may reſiſt all Paſſion, and, inſtead of being governed by theſe, may follow the Rules Thou haſt given me, and ſtrive to overcome by the Arms Thou putteſt into my Hands, by Moderation, Meekneſs, Patience, Silence, and doing Good for Evil.

This I moſt earneſtly beg of Thee, becauſe I ſee the Madneſs of hearkening to my own Paſſions, when I have Thee to teach me what I am to do. I know Paſſion is blind and unreaſonable. I know it is the Effect of Impatience, and, in itſelf, is a great Weakneſs of Mind: I know it leads to Confuſion, and inſenſibly draws me into many Sins: This

This I know by a long Experience. And is it not a ſtrange Stupidity, that, as often as it appears, I preſently take this for my Counſel and Guide? I give Ear to it, I follow it, and think nothing more reaſonable than to do what it adviſes: And this when I know it to be contrary to what Thou, my God, not only teacheſt, but likewiſe commandeſt me to do.

And what is it I do leſs in this than reject Thee and thy Goſpel, and follow falſe Gods, not as the Heathens, made of Wood or Silver, the Work of their own Hands, but made up of Blindneſs, Violence, Corruption, and Sin; theſe I chooſe before Thee, my God, and, at the Time, think I have Reaſon to do ſo. And is not this an Infidelity I have Reaſon to lament, and with all the Powers of my Soul, to implore thy Aſſiſtance for its Amendment?

Grant therefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may, for the future, be afraid of Paſſion, as of the worſt of Monſters; and, upon the frequent Experience I have had, judge it as unreaſonable to hearken to its Suggeſtions, as to chooſe one out of a Mad-houſe for Counſel in Matters of Concern and Difficulty. Grant that, amidſt all its Heat and plauſible Pretexts, I may remember it to be a Snare and a Cheat; that it is a Sin, and leads to Variety of Sins; that I am my own Enemy, if I believe and follow it; that, whatever I deſign againſt others, I ſhall certainly do myſelf the greateſt Miſchief by adhering to it.

And,

And, upon this, O God, may I turn to Thee; and knowing Thee to be All-wiſe, all Goodneſs and Mercy; that Thou knoweſt what is beſt to be done, what is beſt for me, and that what Thou adviſeſt is both for my preſent and everlaſting Good; may I adore thy Goodneſs, and, renouncing my own Inclinations, embrace what Thou teacheſt, and reſolve to follow it, notwithſtanding all that Nature, Paſſion, and the Devil ſhall ſuggeſt to me. And, ſince Thou both teacheſt and commandeſt me to ſeek and keep Peace, by being meek, moderate, humble, and by doing good to thoſe who treat me ill; grant, O merciful God, that I may be conſtant in this Practice, and in this Labour, to give Proof of being thy Diſciple.

O God, if, by thy helping Grace, I could overcome my own Paſſion, and do what Thou commandeſt, how happy ſhould I be in the Comforts of a laſting Peace? What a Calm ſhould I enjoy amidſt the greateſt Provocations, ſince, if I obſerve thy Directions, there is no Provocation can be enough for breaking Peace with any Neighbour; And here, O God, give me Leave to own thy Directions, that I may bleſs thy Goodneſs towards me, and that my Conſcience may have its Sting as often as I obſerve them not.

If any one rails at me, Thou commandeſt me not to rail again.

If any one curſes me, Thou commandeſt me not to curſe again; but to render Bleſſing for Curſing.

If

If any one reproaches, or accuſes me falſely, Thou commandeſt me to rejoice, and refrain my Tongue from Evil.

If any one does me an Injury, Thou commandeſt me to forgive it.

If any one perſecutes me, Thou commandeſt me to pray for him.

If any one does Evil to me, Thou commandeſt me not to render Evil for Evil, but to do Good for Evil.

If any one be contentious, Thou commandeſt me to do nothing in Strife, but all without Murmuring or Diſputing.

If any one be paſſionate againſt me, Thou commandeſt me not to avenge myſelf, but to give Place unto Wrath.

If any one provokes me, Thou commandeſt me to be patient towards all Men, and to put away all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking.

If any one be uneaſy and troubleſome, Thou commandeſt me to bear with ſuch, to be compaſſionate, kind, and tender-hearted.

If any one be my Enemy, Thou commandeſt me to love him, and overcome Evil with Good.

In this Manner Thou haſt provided, O God, againſt all Occaſions of Strife, ſo that none can break Peace that obſerve the Rules Thou haſt given us. Grant, O moſt gracious Lord, I may lay theſe thy Rules in my Heart, that by them I may govern myſelf, as often as I meet with Provocations, or any other Occaſions of Diſturbance. Let theſe be the Rule

of

of my Practice, and may my Soul be humbled in Confuſion as often as I forſake theſe and follow my own Paſſion. Help me, O God, in this Point, and, as Thou haſt taught, ſo may I endeavour to keep Peace.

But, as I aſk for Patience, ſo likewiſe I now add one Petition more, and aſk for Diſcretion, that this may help me in keeping Peace. For, as by my unſeaſonable and indiſcreet Words, I unthinkingly lay the Seed of Diſſenſion, and give Occaſion to Differences; ſo likewiſe I find, that, by whiſpering, and relating to others what has been ſaid of them behind their Backs, I many Times cauſe great Animoſities and Diſputes, ſuch as ought not to be amongſt Chriſtians. Now, O God, for whatever I have hitherto done in this Kind, I here own the Fault; I own it is a great Indiſcretion; I own it is a Sin; I own it is a treacherous Officiouſneſs, which diſtracts Families and Friends, breaks Peace, undermines Charity, and, too often, makes ſuch deep Impreſſions as are never afterwards to be removed. But, O merciful Lord, as far as I have thus done fooliſhly, to my Neighbour's Injury and my own, and offended Thee, I now here proteſt it grieves me to my Heart; I repent of whatever I have done to the Prejudice of Charity and of Peace; and, I beſeech Thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive me.

But then grant likewiſe to thy Servant that Grace of Charity and Diſcretion, that, for the Time to come, I may better govern

my Tongue, that I never let fall any ſuch indiſcreet Words, as may make any Difference; that, to ſatisfy the Itch of Tattling, I never ſpeak what Prudence and Charity require to be concealed; that I never concur in making or widening any Breach, by whiſpering, exaggerating, or repeating what others have ſaid. This, O God, I beg with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, becauſe I know my eternal Happineſs very much depends upon it; for, ſince Thou haſt given ſuch repeated Commands of keeping Peace; haſt promiſed a Bleſſing to Peace-makers, and ſecured to them the Title of being the Children of God; have not I Reaſon to apprehend not only thy Diſpleaſure, but thy ſevereſt Judgments, even of being caſt off from being thy Child, if I concur, through my Fault, to the breaking of Peace. Thou haſt given me too much Ground to fear it, and, therefore, I here petition for thy Grace, that I may amend whatever Evil I have done in this kind; that I may keep Peace with all, as far as is poſſible, and, neither by Word or Deed, be the Occaſion of breaking Peace between others.

In Time of any Quarrel, or of Paſſion-working.

RETire from the Occaſion, as ſoon as may be, and, in private, fall down upon your Knees before God, imploring his Help. If the Diſturbance be great, or continues, proſtrate yourſelf to the Ground, like Chriſt in the Garden, and, with greater Humility, endeavour to move God to your Aſſiſtance. Look

Look down upon me, O God, and ſhew Mercy to thy Servant; for, behold my Soul is diſturbed.

A Storm is riſen within me, and it is Thou alone who canſt command a Calm.

My Soul is darkened, and there is nothing of Help or Life left within me.

My Thoughts are in Confuſion, and reſtleſs Paſſion diſturbs my Breaſt.

O God, have Compaſſion on me, and forſake me not in this Hour of Trouble.

Behold, now I am in Diſtreſs; but, I beſeech Thee, let not my Paſſion prevail.

Let not my Paſſion prevail within me; for I know it is ſinful, and leads to Sin.

Give me Grace to ſtand againſt it as an Enemy; and ſuffer me not to hearken to its Suggeſtions, and be deluded by it.

§. II.

Give Ear, my Soul, while Paſſion is working ſo ſtrongly within thee, thy God calls upon thee.

He commands thee to be patient under thy Trouble: He commands thee to ſubmit to his divine Will, even in this preſent Trial.

He commands thee to forgive Injuries, and even to love thy Enemies.

Lift up thy Eyes to him, and ſee; is not He thy God? And, art not thou his Creature?

And wilt thou now ſtop thy Ears, and turn away thy Face from him?

Haſt thou any Hopes of Salvation, or of any Good but what is to come from him?

What then is it thou doſt? Wilt thou have more Regard to thy own Paſſion than to him?

Wilt thou be governed by thy Paſſion, and not by him?

§. III.

What can thy Paſſion do for thee? It puts thee at preſent into great Diſorder, and fills thee with Confuſion.

It corrupts thy Reaſon, and darkens thy Faith.

It hides God from thy Eyes, and perſuades thee to rebel againſt him.

It perſuades thee to Folly and Raſhneſs; to ſuch Things as are both injurious to thyſelf and to thy Neighbour.

To ſuch Things as thou wilt be aſhamed of when Peace returns, and muſt be the Matter of thy Repentance.

And is this what thou ſetteſt up againſt thy God, and thinkeſt its Commands more reaſonable than his?

Ah, wretched, unhappy Soul, if this be thy Choice!

Ah, miſerable Sinner, if ſuch be thy Blindneſs!

§. IV.

But be now more wiſe: Turn to thy God, and amidſt all thy Diſorders bow down and adore him.

Bow

Bow down, and now force the ſtubborn and rebellious Will to yield to his Commands.

Renounce thy Paſſion as a Monſter that would devour thee, or draw thee into the Snares of Hell.

Adore thy God, whoſe Mercy is ſolicitous for thy Good, and requires thy Obedience, that thou mayſt not make thyſelf miſerable.

Accept of his Commands, open thy Arms, open thy Breaſt and receive them.

For in them God ſpeaks to thee, and not only ſhews thee, but commands thee to be wiſe and happy.

And what now canſt thou ſay of thyſelf, if thou wilt not hear when God calls upon thee?

If thou ſtill giveſt Ear to thy Paſſion, and wilt have no Regard to what God pleads and commands, and all for thy Intereſt?

§. V.

Ah, rebel Soul, turn towards thy God, and hear how he preſſes thee to Charity and Peace.

He commands thee to forgive, and be reconciled, and, till this be done, he declares thou ſhalt have no Part in him.

He declares he will not receive thy Gift at the Altar: He will not hear thy Prayers, and that whatever thou aſkeſt ſhall be in vain.

He declares that thy Sins ſhall not be forgiven, till thou forgiveſt thy Neighbour;

and that, till this be done, as often as thou aſketh Pardon for thy Sins, it ſhall be to aſk Judgment againſt thyſelf.

He declares, that, till thou haſt from thy Heart endeavoured to make Peace, thou ſhalt not ſee his Face.

Theſe are the Declarations God makes to thee; theſe are his Threats publiſhed to thee, in theſe very Circumſtances in which thou now art.

Deceive not therefore thyſelf with vain Pretexts of having Reaſon on thy Side, or the Provocation being greater than can be borne.

For there is no Reaſon can be allowed againſt God's Commands: No Difficulty can be an Excuſe for Diſobedience to his Law.

§. VI.

Thou muſt either do what he requires, or ſuffer what he threatens.

For as he is merciful to the repenting Sinner, ſo he manifeſts his Juſtice in puniſhing the Obſtinate.

It is he commands thee, whom the Angels obey, in whoſe Preſence the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and to whoſe Voice both Heaven and Earth are ſubject.

It is he commands thee, who has caſt the rebellious Angels out of Heaven for their Sin; who baniſhed our firſt Parents out of Paradiſe; who drowned the whole World; who conſumed *Sodom* with Fire.

If Sin be thus puniſhed by him; Who art thou, that ſtandeſt out againſt his Commands? Who art thou, that refuſeſt to hear his Voice?

If

If thou haſt Power above Men and Angels, to defend thee againſt his Wrath; thou art then ſafe in following thy own Ways.

But if thou art like other Sinners, what canſt thou expect? Either amend, or take Part in the Puniſhment of Sin.

For it is the ſame God ſpeaks to thee, who ſpake to them, and, being not heard, made them feel the Weight of his Juſtice.

§. VII.

But it is not only his Juſtice, but his infinite Love to Man, calls upon thee to follow the Ways of Peace.

Lift but up thy Eyes, and ſee thy Redeemer nailed to a diſgraceful Croſs, and dying under the Torments of it.

For whom does he ſhed his ſacred Blood? Is it not for ſinful Man?

For whom did he undertake that laborious Work of the Redemption? Was it not for his Enemies, for thoſe who had infinite Ways offended him?

If then God does ſo much for his Enemies; if thou thyſelf art one of thoſe Enemies; and for this let thy Sins ſpeak:

If notwithſtanding all thy Ingratitude, Wickedneſs, and repeated Crimes againſt him, he ſtill offers thee Peace, ſeeks thee, while thou runneſt from him, calls aloud after thee, whilſt thou turneſt thy Back upon him, and even gives his Life for the Pardon of thy Offences:

If God does thus for thee; what is there thou, poor ſinful Worm, canſt refuſe to do?

Is not this his Love enough to draw thee into the Ways of Charity?

Wilt thou do nothing for thy Neighbour, while thy God does ſo much for thee? Wilt thou neither imitate the Charity of thy God, nor obey his Commands?

§. VIII.

Unhappy Creature, if neither Juſtice, nor the Love of thy God, can move thee!

Look upon thyſelf, and ſee (if thou art not quite blind) how deſperate thy Caſe muſt be, and how contemptible.

Whilſt there being nothing good, nothing holy, but God, thou ſtandeſt out againſt all that is in him.

Whilſt all the Good thou canſt expect, and all the Intereſt thou haſt, depending entirely upon him, thou renounceſt all thy Dependance on him.

Put by the Blind of thy Paſſion a little, and ſee if thou canſt be thus deliberately mad.

What wilt thou; what canſt thou do without thy God?

See but how poor a Thing thou art, whilſt a little Breath of a Worm, like thyſelf, a little Provocation of Contempt or Affront, quite overthrows thee, and puts thee in Confuſion.

And what then art thou, to ſet thyſelf up againſt thy God? What wilt thou do, when the Arm of the Almighty is ſtretched forth againſt thee?

§. IX.

Ah, my God! Far be this from me. I ſee my Weakneſs, and I confeſs it before Thee.

I am

I am nothing but Miſery; I can do nothing without Thee; much leſs can I do any Thing againſt Thee.

My whole Dependance is on Thee: My Happineſs is in thy Commands; and all the Good I can expect, muſt be the Effect of thy Grace and Mercy. Behold then, I here acknowledge thy Law, I receive thy Commands, and I make a Surrender of myſelf to Thee, my God.

Nature, it is true, is unwilling to bend, and my ſtubborn Paſſion dreads a Submiſſion.

But let all bow down, and ſubmit to thy Will, who art the ſovereign Lord of all.

This is what I declare and approve, as moſt juſt; this what I deſire, as moſt holy.

For Thou alone art good and holy, and I am corrupt and ſinful; and my only Good is in renouncing myſelf, and following Thee.

§. X.

Help me in this, O God, I beſeech Thee: The Senſe of my own Miſery, and of thy Goodneſs, preſs me, with Earneſtneſs, to make this Petition to Thee.

Thou ſeeſt what my Diſturbance is, and how far it has caſt me off from Thee; nay, how near it has brought me to the State of an Unbeliever.

Thou ſeeſt how weak I am; ſo that tho' my Deſires, through thy Grace, are good; yet how little able am I to overcome it.

Stand by me therefore now, O God; come in to my Aſſiſtance, and help me with thy moſt perfect Grace.

Have Compaſſion on me, and let thy Mercy, and not my Sin, prevail againſt me.

Thou haſt ſhewed thy Mercy to be infinite to repenting Sinners, and an equal Compaſſion to the Diſtreſſed.

This gives me Encouragement to aſk, and even to hope for Help, while, thro' my great Unworthineſs, I know I deſerve nothing.

§. XI.

All I can do is to declare an Abhorrence of my own Ways, and to make a Proteſtation of following thine.

Behold then, with all Sincerity, I pronounce theſe ſacred Words; Lord, not my Will, but thine be done.

Thou commandeſt me to forgive all Injuries, and even the preſent: Lord, I forgive it: Thy Will be done.

Thou commandeſt me to overcome Evil with Good: Lord, in Obedience to Thee, I will do Good for Evil; thy Will be done.

Thou commandeſt me to be patient, and to deny myſelf: Lord, I will now reſiſt my own Inclination, and with Patience bear the preſent Evil; thy Will be done.

Thou commandeſt me to ſuppreſs all Motions of Anger or Paſſion, and with Meekneſs to humble myſelf under thy Appointments; Lord, I will endeavour to do thus; thy Will be done.

Thus, O Lord, do I propoſe no other Rule to myſelf, but thy holy Will.

And whatever I find within myſelf contrary to thy Will, I reſolve to ſtand againſt it, and thus in all Things acknowledge Thee to be my God.

§. XII.

§. XII.

But then, O moſt gracious Lord, let thy Hand be with me, to be my Help.

Let thy Grace give me Strength to ſuppreſs all Motions of Anger, and ſtifle all Reſentments.

As often as theſe ſhall ariſe, may I forthwith ſtand againſt them, and with Reſolution diſſipate all ſuch Thoughts.

May I then remember the Engagement I have made with Thee; and, having choſen Thee to be my God, may I no more adhere to thy Enemy.

And if Nature will not eaſily yield, let me then be mindful, that Heaven is to be gained by Violence, and even force it to comply.

But this muſt be thy Work, O God; and, having now mercifully begun it, I beſeech Thee, mercifully finiſh it.

Leave me no more to myſelf; ſuffer me no more to be carried away by Paſſion.

But now, from this Moment, let me put on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by his Charity and Meekneſs overcame all Evil. Come then, Lord Jeſus, take Poſſeſſion of my Soul.

Of Forgiving Injuries.

O God, who haſt given us no leſs a Form of Charity towards our Neighbour, than thy only Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; grant, I beſeech Thee, O moſt heavenly Father, that I may endeavour, with all my Power, to follow this Pattern; ſo as not only to love my Friends, but likewiſe my Enemies, and to let no

no Sort of Injury ſtraiten that Charity, which, by Chriſt's Command and Example, is due to all.

In doing thus, I muſt own a great Difficulty, becauſe Nature, being provoked, is full of Reſentment, exaggerates the Wrong it has received, ſtrongly pleads the Juſtice of doing itſelf right, and all its Inclination is to render Evil for Evil. Theſe being Difficulties of my Nature, I here moſt humbly beg thy Grace, that Nature may not carry me againſt thy Law; but that, by thy heavenly Aſſiſtance, I may reſolutely give a Check to all ſuch Motions, and force this inward Corruption to yield to thy holy Will.

Thou, O God, who knoweſt my extreme Weakneſs, and the Violence of my Pride and Paſſion, muſt ſee my Caſe to be ſuch, as deſerves Compaſſion, as far as Miſery and Unhappineſs are capable of moving it; for I have no Help in myſelf, whilſt my Reaſon, being darkened, affords but little Light, and, being corrupted by Paſſion, pleads much more for Revenge than Charity. What then can I do here, being deprived of all natural Help, if Thou, my God, doſt not ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and ſupply all my Wants by thy Grace? Have Compaſſion therefore, I beſeech Thee, and, in theſe unhappy Circumſtances, ſuffer me not to periſh; ſhew thyſelf to be the God of Nature, in forcing Nature to be obedient to thy Commands, that I may live and not die.

I con-

I confeſs, Thou haſt given me great Help in this difficult Affair, by making it my Intereſt to forgive the Injuries that have been done me. For when I find Thou haſt both promiſed and threatened, that, with the ſame Meaſure we give to others, it ſhall be meaſured to us again; this plainly aſſures me, that, as I deal with my Neighbour, ſo I ſhall find Thee either merciful or ſevere in thy Judgments. O God, what greater Encouragement canſt Thou give me, than thus to put the Deciſion of my eternal Lot into my own Hands, and to engage me by the Love of myſelf, to be charitable towards my Neighbour, in forgiving whatever Wrong he has done me?

See then, my Soul, how this Affair ſtands. Thou haſt committed many Offences againſt thy God: And thy Neighbour has offended thee. Thy Sins againſt God are ſuch, as expoſe thee to the ſevereſt of his Judgments, make Death terrible, and put thy Eternity to the Hazard of being miſerable with Devils. The Injury done thee may be, in a great Part, the Effect of Miſtake, Surprize, or Indiſcretion; it may be no more than a ſudden Paſſion, already repented of; and, if cauſed by Malice, yet borne with Patience, will certainly do thee more Good than Harm; and, if forgiven from thy Heart, may cancel all the Debt of Sins, which now ſtands againſt thee. Thus ſtands thy Caſe. And is it not a great Mercy, that, upon ſuch eaſy Terms, thou mayſt remove all the Weight of thy Sins, and, notwithſtanding thy manifold Unworthineſs, mayſt hope

hope to find God merciful to thee; it being God himſelf that has ſaid it; *Forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven?*

O God, I here acknowledge thy Mercy; for what have I to fear but my Sins? If theſe be taken away Death has no Sting, and Judgment will be without Terror: But, as long as I have Reaſon to apprehend the Guilt of theſe to ſtand againſt me, I cannot look before me towards Eternity, but the Proſpect is attended with Dread and Confuſion. How merciful then art Thou, O God, to let all this depend upon ſuch eaſy Conditions, and to leave it ſo in my own Hands, that I may hope to find all my monſtrous and numberleſs Sins forgiven, if I do but forgive the trifling Offences committed againſt me by my Neighbour, and, upon ſhewing this Mercy, have the Promiſe of finding Mercy!

I bleſs Thee, O God, for this thy Goodneſs to Sinners, and I deſire all Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth, may adore and magnify thy Name, for this thy infinite Mercy. But then, O moſt gracious Lord, I beg thy Grace to help me in the Acceptance of this thy Goodneſs, and to ſecure me againſt all Abuſe of it. For, as I ſee great Mercy in the Offers Thou makeſt; ſo I ſee great Judgments threatened againſt thoſe who accept them not.

What greater Judgment can there be, than in the Declaration Thou haſt made: *If ye forgive not, neither will your Father, who is in Heaven, forgive your Treſpaſſes:* And what more

more terrible, than the Sentence pronounced by the Apoſtle; *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that has ſhewed no Mercy?* If then I embrace not the Offer of thy Goodneſs, and will not forgive my Neighbour, I fall under all that is here declared, and muſt expect no Mercy from thy Hand.

Dreadful State! To be in want of infinite Mercy, and to be certainly excluded from all Mercy! O bleſſed God, ſuffer me not to be thus blind, as for a Humour, Paſſion, or Anger againſt my Neighbour, to ſhut Heaven againſt myſelf, and deprive my Soul of that Mercy, which infinite Goodneſs offers, and of all that has been purchaſed by the ſacred Blood of my Redeemer. Suffer me not to be thus mad, as to purſue my Neighbour with Anger, and in this Anger to do myſelf ten thouſand times more Miſchief than can poſſibly be ever in his Power to do me.

Far be this from me, O God. Behold therefore I here make it my Choice to renounce all Humour and Paſſion, and Deſire of Revenge; I willingly quit all other Motions of Anger, whatever they be, rather than forfeit the Title, which, by thy Grace, I have to thy Mercy. I am willing to deny my whole ſelf, and all the ſtubborn, perverſe Humours, that are in me, rather than fall under this Sentence, of *having Judgment without Mercy.*

Preſerve me, O God, I beſeech Thee, from this Unhappineſs; and whatever the Struggles of Nature be againſt this Charity, yet ſtill let thy Grace be victorious, and carry me thro'

all

all the Oppoſition that is made againſt me. It is hard for Pride to be thus humbled, to be affronted, and yet to yield: It is hard for Paſſion to be thus provoked, any then tamely to ſit down, without making and Return. But, is it not ſtill much harder to be judged without Mercy; to fall under the Wrath of God, and to be cut off from all Hopes of his Goodneſs appearing in my Behalf? O God, may my Nature be forced to embrace what it is moſt averſe to, and ſubmit to what it moſt abhors, rather than I be brought to this State of endleſs Deſpair, by favouring it in its unchriſtian Deſires.

But, while I beg thy Grace for forgiving all Injuries, I aſk for ſuch Grace of true, ſolid Charity, as to forgive them from my Heart. Becauſe ſuch I confeſs to be my Weakneſs, O God, that ſometimes I fear I do not forgive from my Heart, what I forgive with my Lips. This I have too great Reaſon to ſuſpect, becauſe there remains ſtill ſome Diſaffection or Diſlike; becauſe I ſeldom mention the Parties, but there is ſome Sting in what I ſay; becauſe I willingly join with thoſe who ſpeak to their Diſadvantage; becauſe I feel a Satisfaction in any Thing that is let fall by others to their Diſcredit: Laſtly, becauſe I cannot ſo eaſily bear from them what I do from others, but every little Accident is enough to open the Breach again that has been betwixt us.

Upon theſe Symptoms I have too great Reaſon to be jealous, that, where I pretend to forgive

forgive Injuries, it is no more than a Pretext, but not done from the Heart. Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to hear me in the Petition I now make; that, in this great Point of Charity, on which all depends, I may be ſincere, and not only in Words, but from my Heart forgive, ſo as to retain no Bitterneſs or Ill-will againſt the Parties, with whom I pretend to be reconciled; but to be united to them in ſuch true Charity, as to rejoice in all the Opportunities of doing them good, to embrace them with Readineſs, and to be troubled at any Evil that befalls them. Theſe are the Effects of true Charity, and therefore I beg they may be found in me.

This Petition I offer to Thee with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, becauſe I know how ſubject I am to deceive myſelf in this important Point: And becauſe I likewiſe know how rigorous the Sentence is, which Thou haſt pronounced againſt thoſe who forgive not their Brother from their Hearts: That all their Sins ſhall come to thy Remembrance, and the Puniſhment of them ſhall be as ſeverely exacted, as if not one of them had ever been forgiven. This, O God, is a State to be dreaded, and therefore I beſeech Thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to have Compaſſion on me, under all my Weakneſſes, and deliver me from it. What greater Misfortune can I have, than to have all my Sins revived, and the Debt of my whole Life to ſtand in force againſt me? And yet this is the Miſery I bring upon myſelf, if I do not from my Heart forgive my Neighbour

Neighbour in whatever he has treſpaſſed againſt me.

If Thou art pleaſed to favour me in this Petition, grant likewiſe, I may do thus in forgiving my Brother from my Heart, not only once or twice, or ſeven Times, but ſeventy Times ſeven, as Thou has commanded; that ſo my Charity to my Neighbour may have ſome Reſemblance with that, which my daily Sins ſtand in need of from Thee; and what is this, but to be forgiven at the End of my Life? May I then forgive, O Lord, as I deſire and hope to be forgiven.

Neither let the Fear of encouraging my Neighbour in Evil, be a Motive to me againſt the Practice of this Charity. It is enough that Thou haſt commanded it, O God; and therefore it muſt be Impertinency in me, to be concerned in the Conſequences of thy Precepts. I am to do my Duty, and leave the reſt to thy infinite Wiſdom and Providence, which ſtand in no Need of my Cautions; which, when weighed in thy Balance, I wiſh they be not found without Weight, and no better than plauſible Diſguiſes, and Pretexts of Charity, for the Cover of Uncharitableneſs.

Give ear to me, O God, and grant, I beſeech Thee, my Petitions in this weighty Concern of Charity. Thou haſt ſufficiently informed me, how indiſpenſible it is, and that neither Faith nor Alms, nor ſhedding of my Blood for the Name of Chriſt, can be available without it. Thou haſt taught me, that, if I forgive not the Injuries done againſt me, all my

my Prayers will be to aſk for Judgments againſt myſelf. How miſerable then muſt I be, if, in this Point, I deceive myſelf, and find Reaſons for diſpenſing with thy Precept, which, as Thou haſt declared, will admit of no Diſpenſation?

Hear me then, O God of Charity, and mercifully help me; help me to overcome all the Difficulties of Nature, and let not Pride, Stubbornneſs, or Paſſion, carry me againſt thy Commandment. Unhappy I, if theſe ſtill prevail in me; if I take theſe for my Council and Directors, when Thou thyſelf haſt taught me what I am to do. Give me thy Grace therefore, I beſeech Thee, to ſtand with Reſolution againſt theſe Evils, and tho' Nature be unwilling to bend, let thy Grace be a Force upon it: For why ſhould Sin be heard to my Ruin, where God ſpeaks to my Salvation?

O Jeſus, be Thou my Advocate here, and let the Merits of thy ſacred Paſſion plead for my obtaining what I aſk. Thou haſt made thyſelf my Rule, and no more is required of me, than what Thou haſt done thyſelf for my Encouragement. In this Thou haſt left me without Excuſe, if I fail in this Duty. For how can a Sinner make any Exceptions againſt that, which his Redeemer has done for his Example? Or how can I think that Humiliation hard, I, a poor ſinful Worm, when I ſee Thee, the Son of God, ſtoop to it? It is Thou haſt taught me not only to forgive Injuries, but even to ſeek my Enemies, to invite them by Favours, and

to

to purchaſe their Reconciliation, tho' upon the hardeſt Terms. Grant therefore, O bleſſed Redeemer, that, by thy Help, I may now learn this Leſſon: Grant that in this I may be thy Diſciple. I am weak, and the Contradiction of my Nature is great; but thy Goodneſs and Power are infinite, and there can be no Difficulties where theſe command. Behold then, I beſeech Thee, a poor Sinner, complaining of his unhappy Infirmities, and, with all Sincerity, deſiring thy Help; deſpiſe not my Cries; but now, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies towards Sinners, have Compaſſion on a Sinner, and grant this Petition, of forgiving all from my Heart, without which it will be in vain, that I have believed in Thee.

Mildneſs, Anger.

I Come now before thee, O God, to make a Complaint againſt myſelf, and to deſire thy Grace for my Relief. I profeſs myſelf a Diſciple of my Lord Jeſus, and a Follower of his Goſpel, upon the Obſervance of which, I believe, my Salvation depends. But ſee my Weakneſs, O God, while I believe thus, yet I follow it not; Temper, Inclination, and Nature lead me on; the old Man prevails in me, even while I pretend to have put it off, and to follow the new.

This is too remarkable, ſo that I cannot diſguiſe it even to myſelf, in being eaſily moved to Anger, and Paſſion; in being too angry,

too

too imperious, too harſh and rough, too forward in admitting Reſentments, in taking Exceptions, and too far, O God, too far from that Spirit of Mildneſs, Patience, Long-ſuffering, Moderation, and Meekneſs, which my bleſſed Redeemer has ſo much recommended to me in his holy Goſpel, and taught me by his Example.

Now theſe ill Qualities, tho' in Practice I often juſtify them as reaſonable, and often find Reaſons to excuſe them within myſelf; yet being now in thy Preſence, O God, I ſpeak my Conſcience, I confeſs them to be great Weakneſſes, ſuch as create to myſelf and others many unneceſſary Troubles, and give occaſion to many Sins.

For muſt not that be of a very weak and unfixed Nature, which is eaſily moved; which, with every light Breath or Touch, begins to toſs, and is put into Diſorder?

Are they not generally the moſt contemptible Creatures, which are moſt eaſily provoked and alarmed with that which is not worth their Concern?

Are not the Infirm and Sick moſt eaſily put upon the Fret?

Is there not a Want of Generoſity and Greatneſs in thoſe, who take Notice of ſmall Provocations, and know not how to paſs them by, or deſpiſe them.

Thus it is certainly, if Nature only be conſidered; but, if Regard be had to Faith and to the Chriſtian, do there not, upon this, appear Arguments of a much more conſiderable Weakneſs? For

For is it not a conſiderable Weakneſs in a Chriſtian, who has the Work of Eternity upon his Hands, to be diverted, taken up, and hindered by very inconſiderable and common Trifles?

Is it not a Weakneſs to let the Peace of the inward Man ſo eaſily be diſturbed, when he can do nothing well for Eternity under ſuch Diſturbance?

Is it not a Weakneſs to become impatient upon every light Provocation, when Patience is ſo much commanded; and in the Loſs of which a Chriſtian loſes the Command of his Soul? In Patience thou ſhalt poſſeſs thy Soul.

Is it not a Weakneſs for a Chriſtian ſo eaſily and frequently to lay aſide that Humility and Meekneſs which Chriſt ſo expreſsly commands all his Followers to learn of him?

And how many Sins does the Want of Patience and Meekneſs cauſe in me, whilſt I no ſooner become impatient, but I ſpeak and do ſuch Things as are not only diſedifying and of ill Example, but likewiſe contrary to Reaſon and Juſtice, and to all thoſe Rules which my Redeemer has given me?

Wherefore I now beſeech Thee, O God, to change this my unhappy Temper, and to grant me more Moderation and Patience; as likewiſe ſuch true Firmneſs of Mind, as to be able to bear, unmoved, the common Difficulties and Trials of human Life. This muſt be the Effect of thy holy Grace, to work this great Change in me; and therefore I now addreſs myſelf to the Throne of thy infinite Goodneſs,

Goodneſs, O God, beſeeching Thee to have Compaſſion on a poor unhappy Sinner, who confeſſing his (her) many Weakneſſes before Thee, ſeeks to Thee for Relief.

Thou haſt promiſed to hear and help thoſe who put their Truſt in Thee, thoſe, who having no Confidence in themſelves, in their own Endeavours or Strength, fly with Hope to thy infinite Goodneſs, for the Remedy of their Infirmities. Behold, O God, ſuch a Petitioner before Thee; one who is truly grieved to ſee in himſelf ſo much Weakneſs, and, by the frequent Experience of his fruitleſs Reſolutions, is fully convinced, that all he can do is to no Purpoſe, except Thou, O Lord, art pleaſed to aſſiſt him with thy heavenly Grace, and to give a Bleſſing to his Endeavours.

Diſtruſting therefore in myſelf, and with my Hopes in the infinite Treaſure of thy Goodneſs, I beg the Grant of this my Petition; that Thou would'ſt mercifully vouchſafe to give me ſuch a Spirit as is preſcribed in the Goſpel, to the Followers of my Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt.

Vouchſafe to give me the Spirit of Patience, that I may not ſo eaſily fall into Paſſion, or be ſo much diſturbed within myſelf, upon ordinary Provocations, Diſappointments, or Trials. I find very ill Effects of Anger, in being puſhed on by it to ſpeak not only what is indiſcreet, but likewiſe raſh and uncharitable; ſo that, inſtead of loving my Neighbour, and ſparing him, as Charity obliges me, I then whet my Teeth againſt him, and not only bite him, but even endeavour to do it in the moſt tender Part,

Part, ſo to wound him more certainly, and give him the greater Provocation. Thus this one Sin of mine opens the Way to many, and ſometimes makes ſuch Differences, as are never more to be healed; eſpecially in deſtroying the Peace of Families, and keeping up ſuch an evil Spirit, that nothing can be ſaid or done, but ſome Advantage is made of it; and it furniſhes Matter for continual Clamour and Diſſention.

Thus true it is, That the *Anger of Man works not the Righteouſneſs of God*, but carries him generally againſt all that is juſt and righteous; ſo that in *Saul* I ſee the Figure of all Perſons under this Paſſion: For as he, being exaſperated againſt *David*, was ſeized with an evil Spirit, by which he was puſhed on to lift up his Hand againſt *David*, and, with his Javelin, to faſten Innocence, like a Criminal, to the Wall: So all, that are in Paſſion, ſeem to be ſeized with an evil Spirit; this moves their Tongue, their Hands, and their Eyes; and, under this Influence, Innocence and Juſtice are not ſpared; they are laid under Scandals, and are ſtruck at with ſo much Eagerneſs, as diſcovers plainly, that an evil Spirit directs the Blow.

Many other ill Effects I find of Impatience and Paſſion; in cauſing great Variety of Uneaſineſs, in deſtroying the Comfort of all Bleſſings, and diſturbing my own and my Neighbour's Peace, to the great Prejudice of all Duties that belong to Salvation. Wherefore I now beſeech Thee to give me a greater

Steadineſs

Steadineſs of Mind, ſo as not to be moved at common Accidents, nor to be put into Diſorder upon ordinary Provocations. Give me Patience, in this mortal Life, to bear that Part of the Burthen, which comes to my Share; to bear it with Peace, Humility, and due Compoſure of a Chriſtian.

If I conſider the Multitude of my Sins, theſe tell me, I cannot ſuffer too much; but that all, that happens, is not a Penance proportioned to my Unworthineſs. If I conſider the Example and Commands of Chriſt, I find the Life of a Chriſtian to be the Life of Suffering; that he is to bear even the ſevereſt Trials, with a peaceable Submiſſion to the Will of God, and even to rejoice in the Hope of thoſe Promiſes God has made to ſuch as ſuffer with Patience. If I conſider the Goſpel, I find Patience and humble Suffering recommended above all Things.

And what a Chriſtian then am I, who, being obliged to Patience upon ſo many Titles, have ſo very little; that, whereas I ought to bear all Things, I bear nothing as I ought, and every trifling Occaſion is enough and too much for all the Patience I have? O God, this ſhews my Weakneſs too evidently againſt myſelf, and how unlike I am to what I profeſs. And does it not ſhew too, the little Pains I take, in overcoming myſelf? For, if I were more in earneſt, is there not Grounds enough to hope I might have a greater Command of my Paſſions? Might I not bear many Things with Patience, which now put me into a Flame?

My own Conſcience comes in here Evidence againſt me. For this depoſes; That, when Pride or Intereſt require me to conceal my Reſentments and ſuppreſs my Paſſion, I know how to do it, and bear great Self-denials with ſuch a remarkable Compoſure of Mind, as to let no Sign of Diſturbance appear. And does not this diſcover, how much it is my Fault, as often as I am paſſionate or impatient; ſince, were I as much in earneſt in my eternal as temporal Concerns, I ſhould, with the ſame Reſolution, command my Paſſion, for thy Sake, O God, as upon any other Motive of Self-love or the World.

I confeſs, O God, the Evidence is too clear againſt me; and I muſt acknowledge it is my Fault, that I ſo eaſy and often fall into Impatience. But ſtill, O moſt gracious Lord, I here implore thy Aſſiſtance for the Amendment of this great Failing. Grant therefore, that a lively Faith may at all Times keep my Soul awake; and that, by the Help of this, I may be watchful againſt whatever can be diſpleaſing to Thee; and, by a Diligence ſuitable to an Affair of Eternity, labour to ſtand againſt all thoſe Inclinations, which are either ſinful or lead to Sin. And, in particular, that I may reſiſt all Motions to Impatience, govern my Paſſion, give a Check to Anger, and be afraid of departing from the humble Patience, which is given in Charge to the Followers of thy only Son, our Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt.

But beſides Patience, I here, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, beſeech Thee to give me

me the Spirit of Meekneſs, that, as thy Apoſtle often adviſes, I may be mild and tender-hearted, and gentle unto all; that, for this End, I may lay aſide all Fierceneſs, Harſhneſs, and whatever other Attendants there are of a proud and imperious Heart. This I aſk of Thee, becauſe I ſee Fierceneſs, and all the Effects of Pride, condemned by thy Apoſtle, and all that belongs to Moderation and Mildneſs, very much recommended by him; I ſee the ſame approved by the Example of my Redeemer, and by his Voice I am called to learn it. Grant therefore, O God, that, having ſo great Motives for making this Petition, I may find thy Favour, and now obtain what I aſk.

This Petition I preſs again, becauſe I find all Imperiouſneſs, Fierceneſs, and Harſhneſs towards others, very diſagreeable to my Circumſtances. For what if I have others under me, ſubject to my Beck, and ſuch who dare not controul me? Am not I, a poor Sinner, much worſe, it may be, in the Sight of God than they? Am not I a Criminal, ungrateful and diſobedient to my God? Am not I to die, like them, be laid in the Earth, and to become the Food of Worms! Am not I to be called to an Account, as much as they, and to be judged; and have not I Reaſon to fear, what my eternal Doom may be? May not I for my Iniquities be condemned to Hell: while they for their Patience in the Trials, which I give them, may be for ever bleſſed with God?

O God, if theſe my unhappy Circumſtances were duly before my Eyes, how far ſhould I be from all the Ways of an imperious and impatient Pride: How ſhould I be ſolicitous to temper all my Words and Actions, with Meekneſs, Humility, and Gentleneſs, and let it always appear, that, while I command others, I am always mindful of myſelf being a Servant and many ways unhappy? Now, ſince thus it ought to be, grant, O moſt merciful Lord, that thus it may ever be with me: Grant I may always have a Moderation becoming my Circumſtances, that I may never make others unhappy, who love ſo little to be ſo myſelf; that I may never unneceſſarily provoke others to Impatience, who am myſelf ſo impatient; that I may never be cruel to others, who ſtand ſo much in need of Mercy myſelf. O God, ſince I am daily ſo very much in want of thy Compaſſion, upon the Account of the many Provocations I give Thee; grant I may always ſhew Compaſſion to others, that ſo I may hope to find it with Thee.

And here, O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may no more be prevailed on by the uſual Arguments, which plead againſt the gentler Methods, and pretend a Neceſſity for being ſevere. For tho' ſome perverſe Tempers may ſeem to require it; yet this cannot be, ſo often as I fall into Paſſion, and take hold of this Neceſſity, for juſtifying my own Impatience. For thou, O Jeſus, haſt taught me another Leſſon, whilſt, ſending thy Apoſtles into

into a perverſe and wicked World, Thou didſt command them to go like Sheep into the Midſt of Wolves. Now if the Mildneſs of Sheep was what Thou didſt preſcribe for overcoming the Fierceneſs of Wolves; is it not plain, by the Determination of God himſelf, that there is no Neceſſity of putting on the Wolf for overcoming the Wolf, but that it is much better done by the Meekneſs of the Sheep? So Heaven has decided this Caſe.

Grant therefore, O bleſſed Jeſus, that I may ever follow this Method; I know, how powerful of itſelf it is in moderating the worſt of Natures, and breaking the Violence of Paſſion; and while we ſee how very effectual it is, we diſcover the Greatneſs of our Corruption, and likewiſe of our Indiſcretion, in knowing its Virtue, and making ſo little Uſe of it; in meeting Paſſion with Paſſion, and thus enflaming our Adverſary, when a little Mildneſs would be much more to our Purpoſe, in quite diſarming him, and, without any Conteſt, gaining the Victory.

Now Mildneſs being thus powerful, how much more muſt it be ſo under thy Bleſſing, O God? And where then can be the Neceſſity of departing from it? A Neceſſity may be pretended for giving Liberty to Paſſion, and making it warrantable; but this muſt be by ſuch as have a better Opinion of what Nature inclines to, than what God preſcribes. Grant therefore, O merciful Redeemer, that I may both approve and follow what Thou haſt taught me.

I own there is a Charm in Meekneſs, and a greater Attractive above all Beauty; it is the moſt becoming Ornament of a Chriſtian, and is more prevailing than Ill-humour, Paſſion, Imperiouſneſs or Force; for all theſe have a certain Deformity in them, which raiſes an Averſion or Diſlike, even when the Commands happen to be reaſonable; and they only ſerve to diſturb the Peace of Families, to make Perſons unfit for all Duties, and to cauſe Diſorder where the Pretext is to reform it; and therefore cannot be a general Practiſe, where either Chriſtianity or Diſcretion governs.

Let therefore thy Grace, O God, work this good Effect in me, that I may not only diſapprove what is thus unreaſonable, but likewiſe, with a Reſolution, ſtand againſt whatever Inclinations I find in myſelf, at any Time, to it. Aſſiſt me, I beſeech Thee, in this, and let thy Grace prevail in me above Nature, and may I never more be wanting in any Endeavours neceſſary on my Part, for overcoming myſelf. By this Means may I come to that Steadineſs, as to be above Provocations, and to let no Accident deſtroy that inward Peace, which is the Comfort and general Help to a Chriſtian Life. May I ſtudy to be gentle and meek towards all, and confide in this Method for effecting whatever I have to do. I have ſufficient Encouragement for this from thy Example, O Jeſus, from thy Orders, from thy Commands; and having beſides theſe the Promiſe of a Bleſſing (*Bleſſed are the Meek*) grant, that I may ever depend on this, and

may

may never pretend or desire to go farther than this will carry me.

SOLICITUDE.

I Know Thee, O God, to be a God of Mercy, that Thou heareſt the Cries of the Miſerable, and takeſt Delight in helping the Afflicted. The Knowledge of this thy Goodneſs brings me into thy Preſence this Day, to lay before Thee my Unhappineſs, and implore thy Mercy for my Relief. See then the Caſe of a poor Sinner.

Through thy Grace, I have a Faith in Thee, and in thy All-governing Providence; that thy Wiſdom overlooks the whole Creation; that nothing happens, but by thy Orders; that thy Goodneſs is engaged for all that truſt in Thee; and therefore, that, as it is my Duty, ſo I may with Comfort and Security caſt my whole Care upon Thee. Thus, through thy Mercy, I believe.

And yet, O Lord, ſee my Unhappineſs, ſee how very great my Weakneſs is: For, notwithſtanding this my Faith, I am ſtill ſubject to infinite Fears, ſtrange Apprehenſions diſturb my Breaſt, and a reſtleſs Concern is my daily Rack; ſo that, tho' I enjoy many conſiderable Bleſſings, of the leaſt of which, O God, I am unworthy, and ſuch as would make others happy and thankful to Thee; yet I, ungrateful and blind, loſe all the Senſe of them, and have little Comfort in what is preſent, thro' the Diſturbance of thoſe Imaginations,

which regard not what is, thro' exceſſive Concern for what is not, and may never be.

And, O God, how many ill Effects has this in me, whilſt it not only makes me ungrateful (Crime enough againſt ſo merciful a Benefactor) but likewiſe ſo ſtreightens my Soul, that I can ſeldom, with true Liberty of Spirit, look towards Thee? Worldly Concerns choke up my Spirit, and ſtrange Oppreſſions deprive me of the much better Part of Life; ſo that, as often as I turn to Prayer, or other ſpiritual Duties, for my eternal Good, my buſy Fears preſently ſink me below all that Concern, and I am ſurprized to find myſelf in the Midſt of the World, when my Deſign was to diſcourſe with Thee.

By this Weakneſs I am in a Manner diſabled, as to the Performance of whatever belongs to thy Worſhip, and the Relief of my Soul; ſo that while I ſee my great Diſtreſs, and how much I ſtand in need of thy Help, I ſee too, I am not able to ſeek or aſk for what I want, having the World ſtill ſtepping in, and my Fears always turning my Heart from Thee. Now being in theſe unhappy Circumſtances, more concerned for Earth, than Heaven, more ſolicitous for this preſent Life, than for Eternity, my Heart worldly, my Mind reſtleſs, my Fears ungovernable, my Imaginations ſtrong, my Judgment weakened, my Memory impaired, my Faith and Hope without Life, and, through this Complication of Evils, being wholly a Stranger to Diſcretion; what can I do, thus miſerable, O God,

but

but lift my Eyes towards Thee, and beſeech Thee to have Compaſſion on me, and at this Time mercifully to aſſiſt me, in aſking for the Help I want.

Wherefore now, O God, ſenſible of the great Indiſpoſition of my Soul, though I cannot aſk, as I ought, yet with all the Sincerity and Earneſtneſs I am able, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee to abate in me this exceſſive Solicitude, to which I am unhappily ſubject. Thou ſeeſt the many and conſiderable Miſchiefs it cauſes in me, to the great Prejudice of my Soul; and whether it may not be, if not remedied, the Occaſion of my eternal Ruin, is known only to Thee. Wherefore, O God, as Thou haſt been, at all Times, a God of Mercy, and ſhewed the Wonders of thy Goodneſs, in the Relief of the Diſtreſſed; ſo now have Compaſſion on me, a diſtreſſed Sinner, who cannot tell how to help myſelf.

If it were in my Power to take off this great Anxiety, and bring myſelf to a more moderate Spirit, I here lay before Thee the Sincerity of my Heart, and declare I would do it. But, O God, to whom all my Weakneſs is known, Thou ſeeſt, while my Deſires are good, how incapable I am of performing it, and that if Thou doſt not both direct and help, and by thy Grace change the whole Temper of my Mind, I may complain of my Misfortune, but muſt live on in Deſpair of ſeeing it remedied.

Help me, therefore, O God of Mercy, and leave not me, thy Servant, to ſtruggle in vain

with my Infirmity. Have Pity on me, for all Things are in thy Power, and if thou wilt, Thou canſt change this perpetual Storm into a Calm.

And for this End, I make it my Petition to Thee, to ſtrengthen and perfect my Faith of the Life to come, that I may have a juſt Apprehenſion of all that belongs to Eternity, and learn to ſet no greater Value on the Things of this World, than they deſerve. Be favourable to me, O God, in this Petition, that I may practically underſtand and condemn the Folly of believing an Eternity to come, and yet of being ſo ſolicitous for the Things of this Life, as if there were no other to follow after it.

Let my Conſcience, O God, lie under this Conviction, and my whole Life be governed by it: That the Time of my Pilgrimage here being uncertain and ſhort, the Concerns of it are inconſiderable or nothing, in Compariſon of Eternity; and that if this goes on well, and be duly taken Care of, the Concern of this momentary State ought not to be very great; becauſe however Things go, whether well or ill, it will ſoon be at an End.

From hence, O God, may I ever ſee the Unreaſonableneſs of being very ſolicitous for the Things of this Life, and of letting theſe ſo devour all my Thoughts, as to have but very little to ſpare for the Buſineſs of my Salvation. Let me ever remember, that I came not into this World, to provide for this World, but for Eternity; that, if I let this World ſteal away my Thoughts and my Care from the other, I commit

commit a great Injuſtice againſt God and my own Soul: That, however buſy I am at preſent, all ſuch Thought and Care will periſh with whatever belongs to them; all will paſs like a Shadow or a Dream, and I ſhall have nothing left at the End, but the Confuſion of having neglected Eternity for ſuch periſhing Trifles.

O God, I muſt here own, with Thanks to thy Goodneſs, that I have ſome Senſe of this now, and I moſt earneſtly beg, that I may ever have. But remember, my Soul, the great Concern is thine. Take Pains therefore and Time, to imprint it well in thy Mind; conſider it frequently, and ſince thou knoweſt thy own Infirmity, at every leiſure Hour, reflect, meditate, and labour to revive ſuch Truths as may help to moderate, at leaſt, if not take off thy immoderate Solicitude for worldly Things.

For what will all this Exceſs of Concern profit Thee?

Thou art under daily Diſquiets; Fears and Uneaſineſs perplex thy Mind.

And for what? It is all for a periſhable Life which cannot laſt: Every Hour and Moment carry away a Part of it; the End of it is approaching, and will ſoon ſurprize thee.

Nay, thy own Solicitude helps to bring it on, while thou daily waſteſt thyſelf with thy own Thoughts, and conſumeſt thy Life, by too eagerly thinking how to live.

And to how little Purpoſe is all this? For what one Thing canſt thou do with all thy Solicitude?

Can thy diſquieting Fears prevent or leſſen the leaſt Part of whatſoever thou dreadeſt?

Canſt

Canſt thou, by thy reſtleſs Apprehenſions, gain any Thing of what is wanting to Thee?

Can thy working Imaginations put Things into a better State?

Thou mayſt diſable thyſelf, and prejudice all thy rational Faculties.

Thou offendeſt God, and, diſcovering both a Want of Faith and Confidence in him, putteſt thyſelf in Danger of being deprived of his Protection and Providence.

This Miſchief thou certainly doſt thyſelf by thy Solicitude; but thou canſt not do the leaſt Good.

And why then doſt thou open thy Breaſt to it? To a Thing which gives thee ſo much Uneaſineſs, and does thee ſo much Injury, but cannot help thee?

Doſt not thou ſee then, that Solicitude is a very unreaſonable and treacherous Paſſion, which, under Pretext of forwarding, moſt evidently hinders whatever thou propoſeſt or deſireſt?

And, is there not too much Ground likewiſe to think it very ſinful?

For, does it not ſhew thou haſt not a due Confidence in God, nor a due Faith of his Providence?

He commands all to call upon him in Time of Diſtreſs; to wait on him in Difficulties, with Comfort and Hope in his Promiſes, and to caſt their whole Care upon him.

And what doſt thou? Thou perplexeſt thyſelf with all that the Vanity of Fear can ſuggeſt to thee. Thou haſt thy Eye always upon human

human Means; to these thy Hopes and Fears are ever proportioned; as far as these give Encouragement, so far thou hast both Hope and Comfort; and, where these fail, there thou art in Despair.

And dost not thou see, that in this there is nothing of Christian Hope; all thy Motions are according to the natural Man; thy Confidence and Comfort are the same, as in a Heathen's depending on Earth, and not on Heaven. And canst thou think this innocent, in one that believes in God?

And what dost thou think of the unequal Distribution of thy Concern and Care? Eternity to be infinitely more considerable, than this Moment of Life; and yet thou to give some general Glances only at the former, and to spend thyself wholly upon the latter! To send some imperfect Wishes only towards Heaven; and to employ all thy Study, thy Care, Interest, and Contrivance upon Earth?

Is this Justice? Is this according to thy Faith? How will this appear, when, at thy last Hour, thou wilt have a Prospect of Eternity before thee; when Eternity will shew thee what a contemptible Moment thy Life has been?

And will not then thy great Injustice be a Confusion to thee, in having had so very little Concern for Eternity, and so very much for Time?

Ah, my Soul! endeavour to comprehend this now; make use of thy Reason, and act according to it; make use of thy Faith, and let this have its due Influence upon all thy inward Motions; let all thy Excesses and Passions be regulated by it; and let thy Solicitude be moderated,

as

as this ſhall preſcribe. Correct all thy Diſorders by the Help of theſe Lights, and leave it not to the Juſtice of God to convince thee of thy Follies, by the Puniſhment of them.

Thus, O God, I ought to do, and thus I now propoſe with myſelf, wiſhing with all my Soul, that by the Help of thy Grace I might be enabled for the effectual accompliſhing my Deſires. Help me then, O God of Mercy, and now at this Time powerfully work this good Effect in my Soul. Grant I may be faithful in the Diſcharge of all my temporal Affairs, and perform them with that Diligence, as Juſtice demands of me, ſo that nothing, entruſted with me, ſuffer through my ill Management or Neglect.

But then, O gracious Lord, take from me all that Exceſs of Care, which is my great Diſquiet, and very diſpleaſing to Thee. Give me, I beſeech Thee, that true Moderation of Spirit, by which, while I propoſe and contrive what I think beſt, I may be ſtill waiting for the Orders of thy Providence, and peaceably receive whatever I ſhall find to be thy Appointment. For this End I moſt earneſtly beg of Thee, to quiet all my vain and immoderate Fears, and to ſuppreſs all thoſe wild Imaginations which diſcompoſe my Mind. Give me Grace and Diſcretion, to be watchful at all Times againſt theſe, to be always fearful of them, even when they ſeem to be innocent, and not to truſt them, when they have even Piety to plead for them; becauſe it is under theſe Colours

Colours they become Snares to me, and often make me unfit for all that is good.

Rather, O God, ſtrengthen my Faith, and my Dependance on Thee; for I know Thee to be infinite in Wiſdom, in Power and in Goodneſs; that nothing can happen to me without thy Knowledge and Order; that what Thou ordereſt, however it may ſeem to me, is certainly for the beſt; that, if I truſt in Thee, I ſhall not fail of thy particular Protection. And hence, O Lord, whatever my Deſires or Propoſals be, I beſeech Thee, it may be my only Care to do, with Diligence, what belongs to me; and then to leave it, with an entire Confidence, in thy Hands, to give a Bleſſing, if it ſhall ſo ſeem good in thy Eyes, or to order it otherwiſe, as thy infinite Wiſdom ſhall determine.

And this, O God, may I in all Things and at all Times do, with a peaceable and ſatisfactory Submiſſion, ſuch as is always due from a Creature to its God; moſt firmly believing, even in the midſt of Diſappointments or Diſtreſs, that it is beſt it ſhould be ſo; that it is ſo judged by thy incomprehenſible Wiſdom; and therefore, that I ought to judge ſo. For, who am I, that I ſhould pretend to judge contrary to Thee, or diſapprove what Thou doſt?

This Petition, therefore, I repeat to Thee again, O God, that, in all Things, I may conſider what is my Duty, what the Glory of thy Name, or the Good of my Neighbour may demand of me; and having through the

the Direction of thy Grace, determined this Point, that I may undertake it under thy Protection, go on with it with Courage and Confidence in thy Bleſſing; not be dejected at Difficulties, Oppreſſion, or Diſappointments; but, with Peace, leave it in thy Hands, to give it the Iſſue which, in thy Wiſdom, ſhall ſeem beſt to Thee.

For this End, I beſeech Thee again to give me a compoſed and ſteady Mind, free from all Exceſs of Apprehenſion and Fears; deſirous to do well, and induſtrous in ſo doing; but without all immoderate Solicitude, as to the Effect. For, as to the Succeſs of all Things, this, I know, depends entirely upon Thee; and therefore, as it belongs to Thee, ſo I beg that I may ever leave it to Thee, without making any Exceptions againſt it, whatever it be.

Thus, O God, may I ever go on, diligent and zealous, but not ſolicitous; with a great Confidence, not in my Induſtry or Management, but in thy Bleſſing; and with an entire Hope in thy Goodneſs; that, whatever my Diſappointments or Diſtreſs may be, it may ſtill be my Comfort, that Thou art concerned in my Undertakings, and that, if they ſucceed not as I propoſe, it is becauſe Thou, O God, haſt ordained it ſome other Way. And in this may I ever reſt, caſting off all Solicitude as a great Temptation; as a dangerous Infirmity; as a Weakneſs unbecoming the Faith and Hope of a Chriſtian; as a violent Paſſion which diſables the Soul, and lays it open to many Snares of the Enemy; and therefore grant, I beſeech Thee,

Thee, that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may be ever watchful againſt it.

Reſignation.

THE Senſe of my preſent Wants brings me now a Petitioner to Thee, O God, to beg thy Aſſiſtance in behalf of a poor Sinner, who muſt periſh under my Weakneſs, if thy Grace does not prevent it.

My great Complaint is againſt myſelf, that I feel an inward Rebellion againſt thy Appointments, and am ſubject to great Diſquiets, becauſe thy Will is done, and not mine. Now in this I ſee a very ſinful Deformity, becauſe I know it is the Duty of all Creatures to acknowledge Thee, their ſovereign Lord; and this not only in a formal Profeſſion of Words, but in a practical and ready Submiſſion to thy Orders; ſo as to approve thy holy Will as juſt; to reſt in it as that which ought to be; to have Comfort and Joy in it, as being that which is the beſt.

This I know ought to be; and, therefore, as no Creature ought to rebel againſt Thee, ſo none ought to diſpute the Reaſonableneſs of thy Will, or ſay to Thee, Why haſt thou done thus? This is not the Part of a Creature to its God, but rather to wait thy Pleaſure, and ever to embrace thy Will as moſt adorable.

This being my Duty, have not I great Reaſon to approach to Thee, at preſent, who find ſo much Uneaſineſs within myſelf; who preſently become fretful, or dejected, as often as any

any Trouble arises, or Difficulties occur, which, in the Order of thy Providence, may be designed for my Good? This, I am certain, is not what Thou hast taught?

Wherefore, I beseech Thee, O God, to grant me a more christian Temper; such a Temper as may be conformable to the Commands and Example of my Lord Jesus Christ; that I may not regard my own Inclination, or worldly Conveniences, but, above all Things, thy holy Will, and learn to rejoice in that as my only Good.

For this End I make my most earnest Address to Thee, that Thou wouldst please to take from me all Violence of Inclination, of Humour, or Passion, and so to moderate all my Proposals and Desires of worldly Things, that, whatever it be I propose, I may be still prepared to receive all the Discouragements or Disappointments which Thou shalt please to permit. It is hence arises my present Unhappiness, that I am carried on with too much Eagerness, and depend too much upon what I propose; and therefore I beseech Thee to give me more Moderation, and to abate in me whatever is too violent; for thus I hope to be more easy, whenever I find my Expectation defeated.

Grant likewise, that I may set no more Value upon worldly Things than they deserve; that, knowing them to be uncertain and perishable, I may neither seek them with too much Earnestness, nor possess them with too great a Dependance, nor afflict myself upon their being changed, lost, or taken from me.

I ask

I aſk again of Thee, O God, that, whether in publick or private Concerns, I may not be too poſitive in my own Deſires, or in laying out the Courſe and Iſſue of Things, as if I certainly knew what was for the beſt: Rather, O God, I beſeech Thee, let it be my conſtant Practice to ſuſpect all my own Deſires, and, even then, to give a Check to them, when I find them too much determined.

I confeſs, O God, I am very ſhort-ſighted, and that all the Conſequences of my Deſires are under ſo great a Darkneſs, that I have Reaſon to fear whatever I propoſe. I confeſs again, that I am ſubject to great Miſtakes in the Choice of Means for the accompliſhing what I propoſe as good; ſo that I am often ſurprized with Effects quite contrary to what I had deſigned.

Thus I frequently experience; and thus, I do not queſtion, Thou art pleaſed to order it, that I may not have a Confidence in myſelf; and may be convinced, that all the Projects, and Prudence, and Counſels of Men, are not to be depended on.

If there be ſufficient Grounds for this diſtruſting of myſelf, then turn, O God, I beſeech Thee, all my Expectation and Confidence on Thee, that there I may entirely reſt, where there can be wanting neither Wiſdom to foreſee, nor Power to effect whatever Thou propoſeſt either for publick or private Good.

Let my Soul, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, be ever poſſeſſed with this Truth, that Thou

Thou alone knoweſt what is beſt, and that in thy holy Will is the Accompliſhment of all that is good. And may the Evidence of this Truth ſo prevail with me, that I may at all times be ready to yield up my own Thoughts and Deſires, and to embrace the Appointments of thy Will.

For, ſince I am nothing but a Mixture of Weakneſs and Darkneſs, and in thy Will alone is all Wiſdom, Holineſs, and Juſtice, where can I expect to find what is good but in Thee? In this then, O God, may I always be ſatisfied, that nothing can happen to me, but according to thy Will; and may this Principle have ſo much the Conduct of my Life, that it may ſilence all Complaints, and quiet all Uneaſineſs into a patient Submiſſion.

Oh, that all my Paſſions were under this Government; that, whatever their Violence or Diſturbance may be, upon diſcerning thy Will, they may ever ſubmit; that I may make this my conſtant Rule, to complain, or ſay no more, when I reflect, than, that it is Thou, O Lord, haſt done it.

How many grateful Sacrifices might I offer every Day to Thee, my Lord, were my Soul under this good Diſcipline! What an Advantage might I make, could I thus, upon every Contradiction, Trouble, or Diſappointment, bow down, and ſay from my Heart; *Be ſilent all you troubleſome Paſſions, let the Will of my Lord be done.*

O God,

O God, I plainly apprehend what a chriſtian Peace here might be, amidſt the greateſt Diſturbance, could I gain this Point. And obſerve, my Soul, what it is: It is only this, that thou approve and be pleaſed with the Will of God being done in thee. And, canſt not thou do this?

O God, who am I, that I ſhould not approve thy Will?

Thou art infinite in Wiſdom, and in Power and Glory; I am a poor ſinful Worm; and, who am I, that I ſhould diſpute thy Will?

Thou art the ſovereign Lord of the World; I am the moſt unworthy of thy Creatures, who, by my frequent Sins, have made myſelf contemptible in thy Sight: And, who am I, that I ſhould make Exceptions againſt thy Will?

Thou art ſupreme Judge of the Univerſe, and all thy Judgments are juſt: I am a Criminal, and, by my Offences, am become unworthy of all thy Mercies: Who am I then, that I ſhould be uneaſy under thy Appointments?

I make it my Profeſſion to follow Thee, and pray every Day, that thy Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: And, who am I now, that I ſhould murmur at thy Will?

I ſee the Sun, Moon, and Stars obedient to thy Beck; the Sea and Earth, with all Creatures in them; the Heaven, with the bleſſed Spirits, all yielding a ready Submiſſion to thy Will: And who am I, that I ſhould ſtand out againſt it?

O God,

O God, far be this from me; far be it from me to be guilty of this Contempt againſt infinite Majeſty and Goodneſs.

I ſee the Folly and Madneſs of this Rebellion, and therefore here declare my Abhorrence of it.

And moſt humbly beg of Thee to confirm me againſt the Guilt of what I ſee to be ſo unreaſonable.

For behold, I here acknowledge before Thee, that I am a poor, helpleſs Creature, and know not the Things that are for my Good.

I am in the Dark; and though I have many Wiſhes, yet cannot tell whether the obtaining my Deſires may not be my greateſt Misfortune.

I have Variety of Uneaſineſs, but know not whether the Subject of my Complaints may not be the beſt for me, and even the Effects of thy Mercy.

I have many Propoſals and Contrivances, and am eager in them; and yet cannot tell whether that which I purſue with Earneſtneſs may not prove my Ruin.

I have many Diſappointments, and think myſelf unhappy under them; and yet do not know but they may be neceſſary for my eternal Good.

Being thus blind, and, having Ignorance and Uncertainty attending all whatever I propoſe,

There can be nothing better for me than to depend entirely upon thy Will.

For nothing is hid from Thee; thy Goodneſs propoſes what is beſt; and thy Wiſdom and

and Power are ſuch, that Thou canſt not be ſubject to Diſappointments.

Behold then, O God, I ſurrender myſelf, from this Moment, into thy Hands, with all that belongs to me; and likewiſe whatever I ſhall undertake, through the whole Courſe of my Life.

I will only do, on my Part, what thy holy Will and my Duty, according to the beſt of my Apprehenſion, ſeem to demand of me.

But then I leave it to Thee, my God, to order and diſpoſe all Things, without any Reſerve, and as entirely as if I had propoſed nothing to myſelf.

Do with me then, O Lord, as Thou pleaſeſt, and, without any Regard to my own Inclination, may thy holy Will be always done in me.

I aſk nothing but this, Lord, thy Will be done; give me Grace to be always eaſy under the Effects of thy Will.

Grant I may ſeek or deſire nothing out of Thee, for, if I reſt not in thy Will, it is plain I ſeek not my Reſt in Thee.

And, how can that Creature be happy, which has not its Satisfaction but out of God?

O bleſſed God, may this never be my Caſe. May all my Reſolutions be directed by thy Law.

May my Dependance be on thy Bleſſing, and my Will be always ready to embrace whatever Effect Thou ſhalt give.

May my daily Comfort be in thy holy Will being done; and may this Comfort be ſo truly

ſolid

ſolid, as to chaſe away all Uneaſineſs, and ſubdue all Paſſions.

In the Midſt of all Diſturbance and Diſtreſs, may the Remembrance of thy Will recover all into a Calm.

In thy holy Will is the Bliſs of the Saints; may this Happineſs now begin in me; may it go on ſtill encreaſing, till it comes at length to be finiſhed in the Glory of the Bleſſed. Lord, thy Will be done.

Grant, O Lord, I beſeech Thee, that this may be the ſettled Diſpoſition of my Mind; that, whatever thwarts my Inclination, may not raiſe in me any Paſſion, but be preſently embraced, as the Occaſion of my acknowledging my Subjection to Thee, and practiſing that ready Obedience I profeſs. Grant in this I may daily ſhew what my Religion is; for all other Pretenſions are vain, if there be not a Heart that can ſubmit to Thee. This is the practical Worſhip of God; and, without this, the reſt is little better than a Form. For, what is all other Homage, if thy Will be not received and adored? Let it then be thy Mercy to me, that, in this Manner, I may every Day give Proof of being a Chriſtian, in readily and chearfully embracing whatever I know to be thy Will.

And, ſince Thou, O bleſſed Jeſus, haſt taught me, that doing the Will of thy Father is the ſure Way to Heaven; and, by thy Example, haſt ſhewed me how to receive the bittereſt Cup from his Hand; undertake now to be my Advocate in this great Affair,

and

and obtain for me ſuch effectual Grace, that, in the Spirit of an humble and peaceable Submiſſion, I may receive all Appointments from the Hand of God. Let me know no more what it is to murmur, to be impatient or dejected; but in all Occurrencs, tho' the moſt diſagreeable, help me to overcome Nature, and to find Peace in the Will of God. Thus, O Jeſus, may it be with me, in all Kinds of Troubles and Difficulties of this Life; in Reproaches and Diſgrace, in Diſappointments and Loſſes, in Pain, Sickneſs, and alſo in the Agonies of Death. May the Spirit of the Croſs carry me on and ſupport me under all theſe Trials; and, in this ſame Spirit, may I ſurrender my Soul into thy Hands. O bleſſed Jeſus, ſtand then by me, ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and powerfully help me.

Raſh Judgment.

OBſerving a great Weakneſs in myſelf, to the Prejudice of my Neighbour, and much more to my own; I now come to confeſs it with Humility before Thee, O God, and to implore thy Grace for my Amendment.

My Sin is in being ever forward, in paſſing raſh Judgment againſt my Neighbour, and letting every ordinary Occaſion be enough with me to condemn him of Indiſcretion, Folly, and Sin; ſo that ſcarce any Paſſion can happen, or any Relation can I hear, but I

am preſently ſettled myſelf for Judge, and pronouncing Sentence, as Paſſion, Affection, Averſion, Inclination, or ſome uncertain Gueſs happens to direct me.

This, O God, I confeſs to be a great Sin; becauſe it is Thou art the Judge of all, both the Living and the Dead; and it is an Uſurpation in me, to undertake to judge any of my Fellow-Creatures, who am one of thoſe unhappy Criminals who am to be judged. If I caſt but my Eyes upon myſelf, I ſee Evidence of Guilt, for which I have Reaſon to apprehend the Juſtneſs of thy Sentence againſt me; and what a ſinful Madneſs muſt it then be in me, to buſy myſelf in raſhly judging others, who am myſelf an Offender, and expect to be judged by Thee?

How great an Injuſtice muſt I likewiſe very frequently commit; ſince, to pronounce an equitable and juſt Sentence, the Cauſe muſt be truly ſtated, and all its Circumſtances be duly weighed? And how ſeldom or never am I thus qualified for judging, who paſs my Judgement, without knowing half the Cauſe; How often do I pronounce, when the moſt material and determining Circumſtances are hid from me; when I have nothing but ſome Miſtake, ſome imperfect or malicious Information, for the Ground of all that Evidence I ſeem to have within myſelf?

O God, I muſt own this to be too often my Method; and that, while I conclude with ſo much Raſhneſs, I muſt certainly fall under the Guilt of a manifold Injuſtice, and often

ſentence

ſentence thoſe as Criminals, who, before Thee, are wholly innocent.

And, how far is this from that Rule of doing to others as I would have others do to me; Where I am concerned, I would have none ſpeak in the Cauſe but only ſuch as underſtand it; and, as for others, who take Things by halves, or know but one Side, or judge by Inclination, I preſently diſcern the Injuſtice of their Proceeding, and wonder at, as well as reſent the Injury they do me. Thus knowing am I, where the Caſe is my own: But, when it is my Neighbour's, then I do the very Thing I reprehend in others, and ſeem not to ſee now any Danger of being unjuſt.

This, O God, I muſt confeſs to be a great Partiality, and ſinful Blindneſs, ſince I have Reaſon enough to know the Danger; and there is nothing but Raſhneſs, Preſumption, and Uncharitableneſs, which ſhut my Eyes againſt it

And how much do I offend in this againſt Charity, whilſt, inſtead of interpreting every Thing in the more favourable Senſe, I generally put the worſt Conſtruction; and there judge my Neighbour under Guilt, where, had I any true Love for him, I might eaſily find Ways to excuſe him?

Thus am I ſevere and uncharitable, in what belongs to others, and let my own Suſpicions or Fears be enough to frame a Judgment againſt them. But, while I take this Liberty, yet, I muſt confeſs, I know the Fault of it: I know it is what Thou haſt forbidden. I know

my Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, has commanded all his Followers, *Not to judge*; and, while he gives this Encouragement to thoſe who *judge not*, that *they ſhall not be judged*, it is very plain what is his Sentence againſt thoſe that *judge*, that, *with the ſame Judgment they judge others, they themſelves ſhall be judged.* Thus has he declared in Terms againſt ſuch as without Charity judge their Neighhour.

O God, how unhappy then muſt my Condition be, if all the Severity, with which I have judged my Neighbour, is to fall on my own Head; What Hopes have I left for Mercy, who, in this Point, have judged without Mercy? And yet Thou, O Lord, haſt pronounced this poſitive Sentence, and from Thee there is no Appeal.

No Appeal, O God, but to Thyſelf; and therefore before thy Throne I now proſtrate myſelf, with all Humility acknowledging all my Sins wherein I have raſhly judged my Neighbour. I confeſs all my Uncharitableneſs and Injuſtice in this Kind; and it grieves me from my Heart, that, having ſo ſtrict a Precept againſt it, I ſhould thus tranſgreſs thy Law, and provoke thy Diſpleaſure againſt me. But, knowing how infinite thy Mercy is to ſuch as ſincerely ſeek it, behold, I come now with a Senſe of my Unworthineſs, but with a firm Hope in thy Goodneſs, beſeeching Thee to forgive all theſe my Sins: Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me all my Preſumption and Raſhneſs: Forgive me all the Injury I have done my Neighbour within my own Heart; and, from

from my Heart, I beg that the Plenty of thy Bleſſings may be poured forth upon all thoſe whom I have any Ways wronged; that ſo what is wanting in me may be abundantly recompenſed by the Effects of thy Goodneſs towards them. Forgive me, O Lord, who am the Offender, and give a Bleſſing to them whom I have raſhly condemned.

But, with this Mercy, let thy Grace, O Lord, deſcend upon me, to prevent the Return of all ſuch Raſhneſs. I have here acknowledged the Greatneſs of the Guilt, and now beg, from my Heart, I may never more fall under it.

For this End, I beſeech Thee, I may ever have a lively Remembrance of this Truth, that not I, but Thou, O Lord, art Judge of the Univerſe, and before Thee, and according to thy Judgment, muſt every one ſtand or fall.

May I, likewiſe, at all Times, remember the Uncertainty of my own Judgment, and the frequent Miſtakes I have been under where I ſeemed to have Demonſtration.

May I, likewiſe, remember, how unqualified I am for judging my Neighbour's Words and Actions; the full Evidence of which being only from the Sight, or Knowledge of the Heart, they can only be judged by Thee with Truth, who art the Searcher of the Heart.

May I, likewiſe, remember the ſtrict Command Thou haſt given to all, *Not to judge* before the Time; but to wait till Thou ſhalt reveal the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and manifeſt the Secrets of Hearts.

May, likewiſe, the Fear of thy Judgments make me very cautious in this Point, ſince I cannot judge my Neighbour, but my Severity will encreaſe the Terrors of thy Judgments againſt me: And, as thy Apoſtle aſſures me, by judging others I ſhall condemn myſelf.

Thus, O God, may the Memory of theſe Truths put a Reſtraint upon my Thoughts, that I may be ever fearful of judging my Neighbour. Take from me, I beſeech Thee, all Poſitiveneſs and Confidence in my own Apprehenſion of Things, and give me both Diſcretion and Grace, to ſuſpect the Truth of all thoſe Thoughts which are in disfavour of my Neighbour. Here, O God, let thy Commands and Threats awaken my Fear; let my own Experience put me in Mind how deceitful my Certainties are; and let all join together in keeping my Judgment in a total Suſpence, even when I ſeem to have Evidence before me.

This, O Lord, is what Thou commandeſt, and, I know, my only Intereſt is in being obedient to Thee. Grant, therefore, that I may not contrive my own Ruin where Thou haſt mercifully provided againſt it. Grant I may follow the Ways of Charity which Thou haſt ſo ſtrictly enjoined us, and, without which, all whatever I do beſides will be in vain. Thou haſt ſufficiently taught me how to find Mercy by ſhewing Mercy. If this be not in my Power, all other Ways, yet it is always in my Power to ſhew Mercy in judging of my Neighbour with Charity.

This

This then, O God, I aſk of Thee, that, in whatever concerns my Neighbour, I may not permit Diſaffection, Paſſion, Envy, Partiality, or any Diſlike, to direct my Judgment, nor conſult the common Reports of the World; but only take Advice with Charity; and ſince this, in all doubtful Caſes, will not allow the worſt Conſtruction where a more favourable may be had, grant I may hearken to Charity, and ſeek, at all Times, the beſt Interpretation that Things will bear. And if ſeeming Evidence at any Time appears, ſo as ſcarce to leave Place for Doubt, yet ſtill, O God, let this be my Practice, to ſuſpend all poſitive Judgment; and only to ſay, *It appears ſo to me*; ſince this is as far as common Evidence can go. Thus I deſire others ſhould do in what concerns me; and may this be my Rule, as often as the Concerns of others come before me.

But then, O God, I muſt here beg thy Help againſt all thoſe working Imaginations in which I ſeem to cenſure my Neighbour: Some of theſe are very ſubtle and quick; ſome without Reflection; ſome ſeem like buſy Impertinencies; and, the greateſt Part of them, ſuch as I cannot truly diſcern what they are; and how far they may be ſinful I know not. Againſt theſe I implore thy Help, becauſe I have Reaſon to fear them. For, although I know it is *judging raſhly* of my Neighbour that Thou haſt forbidden, and not *fearing*, *doubting*, or *ſuſpecting* where there is Reaſon; yet, ſince I do not with Certainty diſcern the

Compaſs of my own Thoughts, and they may very eaſily exceed, while I, through Neglect or Paſſion, may not obſerve the Exceſs, I have Reaſon to deſire thy Aſſiſtance, that, by thy Grace, I may be ever upon the Watch, and give no Liberty to ſuch Imaginations, which may be very injurious to my Neighbour and myſelf. Help me in this, I beſeech Thee, O God, and deliver me from a cenſorious Temper; I ſee very plainly the great Danger of it, and that into many Sins it muſt unavoidably lead me, if I indiſcreetly give Way to it. Let thy Grace, therefore, be here my Help againſt Inclination, and give me Strength to ſtand againſt it. Let Charity be ever my Director, in putting the beſt Colour on whatever concerns my Neighbour; and whenever any Thing occurs, which ſeems not capable of a good Conſtruction, let me then ſhut my Eyes, and turn my Thoughts to better Objects; and not run the Hazard of ruining my Soul, by buſying myſelf in what does not concern me.

Not to judge by Paſſion, but Reaſon.

I here render Thee Thanks, O God, for the Light of Reaſon which Thou haſt given me. I own it to be a great Bleſſing, and that it may be ſerviceable to me to the beſt of Purpoſes, not only temporal but eternal. And, while I ſee ſome unhappily deprived of it, I have ſtill more Reaſon to humble myſelf in the Acknowledgement of a Mercy, of which, thro' my Sins, I am ſo unworthy. But

But obſerving, O God, that, having this Guide to direct me, I very often do not follow it, but am led along by other falſe Lights, ſetting them up for the Light which Thou haſt given me: Obſerving again, that I often proſtitute my Reaſon to my Paſſions, and employ its whole Strength in pleading ſuch their Cauſes as are wholly unwarrantable; nay, obſerving that my Will, applying my Judgment to what Things, and as far as ſhe thinks fit, makes in it what Impreſſion ſhe pleaſes; and then, after all, excuſes herſelf, as being led by that which God has given her for her Guide, and thus is very culpable where ſhe pretends to be innocent: Obſerving this, I have great Motives for imploring thy Grace to my Aſſiſtance, ſince there muſt be a Neceſſity of great Deluſions where the Light is thus ſmothered; Darkneſs is choſen inſtead of Light, and Deceit lies unſuſpected under ſuch a plauſible Diſguiſe.

O God, how almoſt numberleſs are the falſe Steps I have taken by this Means; ſince, if I look back, I cannot find any one evil, raſh, indiſcreet, paſſionate, or unreaſonable Thing I have ever done, but I have always had ſome Colour of Reaſon to encourage and carry it on. If Sloth or Vanity were to be indulged, I have always found Reaſons for ſo doing. If Inclination led me to ſay or do ſome ſpiteful or uncharitable Thing, I ever had Reaſons to promote it. If Intereſt inclined me to what is unjuſt, I have ſtill had Reaſons to encourage it.

Thus, O God, it has been with me throughout my whole Life. And, now, at preſent, whatever I undertake, or whatever Method of Life I follow, I confeſs I ſeem to have Reaſons for what I do: But there ſeems likewiſe ſuch a Mixture of Inclination, Self-love, or Intereſt, *&c.* That, when I ſtrictly call myſelf to an Account, I have ſcarce any Aſſurance, whether it be ſolid Reaſon, or ſome Paſſion, that govern me.

Upon this Experience of my Ways, I now preſent myſelf a Petitioner to Thee, imploring, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, thy holy Grace to direct me; becauſe I ſee now plainly, that, notwithſtanding all my Reaſon, I have no Security of acting according to Reaſon, except Thou art pleaſed to aſſiſt me by thy heavenly Light; for, without this, all my Light will be nothing better than Darkneſs.

Aſſiſt me therefore, O God, I beſeech Thee, and teach me to diſcern true Reaſon from the Pleading of Inclination, Self-love, and Paſſion. For all theſe, nay and every Weakneſs, to which I am ſubject, have their Reaſons, and preſs them ſo ſtrongly from ſo many Heads, that I am very often at a Loſs; and do not diſcover, whether they are the Truth of Reaſon, or only Deceit. And hence how many indiſcreet, fooliſh, and unreaſonable Things am I led into, under the Colour of doing what is reaſonable!

Conſider me, therefore, O God, for my Caſe ſeems worthy of thy Compaſſion: For

For what will my Reaſon avail me in theſe Circumſtances, if I do not know which is the Light Thou haſt given me, and cannot diſcern it from Counterfeits? For though, in following that, I go right; yet, if I am miſtaken, and follow any other, inſtead of it, I certainly go out of the Way, and this, moſt commonly, with the Danger of Sin: Wherefore, acknowledging here both my Weakneſs and Unhappineſs before Thee, I beſeech Thee, O God, to take me into thy particular Protection, and undertake to be my perpetual Guide; for without Thee, I confeſs, I can have no Security in walking aright.

Deliver me, O God, if it be thy bleſſed Will, from all Poſitiveneſs, and too great Confidence in my own Judgment and Reaſoning; teach me ever to fear myſelf, and to let my whole Dependance be in thy Guidance. For this End, I here declare, my Truſt muſt not be in my own Abilities, but in Thee; and now beg, that, for the future, it may be my conſtant Practice to aſk thy Light and Aſſiſtance, as often as I am to reaſon, conſider, debate, or come to any Reſolution, in whatever concerns myſelf or my Neighbour. This, O God, may I ever do, that ſo, the Light of thy holy Grace directing me, I may never determine, reſolve upon, adviſe, or undertake any Thing rainly.

Help me likewiſe, O merciful God, in the right Uſe of all good Principles, that I never

never make a wrong Application of them that I never wreſt them to the Defence of what is unlawful or not expedient; for theſe I know muſt be very dangerous Errors, and difficult to be reformed, which ſeem to reſt upon ſo good a Foundation.

Defend me from the Violence or Deceit of Paſſion, of Inclination, and Self-love, and give me Grace to diſcern, or at leaſt to ſuſpect, all the falſe Reaſonings which theſe make uſe of in their own Defence. This muſt be thy Gift, O God, for I confeſs my Weakneſs to be ſuch, that my Judgment is often corrupted by Inclination, and I judge more by Favour than by the Force of Truth; and what can I do in this Caſe, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not help me; for this, I fear, is the Error of every Day!

Let thy heavenly Light, O God, likewiſe direct me againſt all the Deluſions or Miſtakes, from Education or Cuſtom. Theſe, I know, make very ſtrong Impreſſions; and it is not eaſy to diſcern the Error of that, which, by Length of Time, is thus become familiar, and it is much more difficult to be perſuaded to relinquiſh it. To how much of this I am ſubject I cannot tell; and hence, I aſk nothing in particular; but this general Petition I make to Thee, that Thou wouldſt vouchſafe me Light to diſcern, and Strength to overcome, whatever favourite Errors I maintain, whether as to Truth or Practice, which have gained upon me, either by Cuſtom or Education. I have ſeen in others a wonder-

ful

ful Blindneſs of this Kind, in Things of the greateſt Concern; and this Blindneſs, unhappily joined with the Perſuaſion of ſeeing very well, by which the moſt conſiderable Evils have become irremediable: And, O God, how do I know, but in ſome other Way this may be my Caſe? But if it be ſo, Thou knoweſt it, O Lord, and I beſeech Thee not to leave me in Blindneſs of any Sort, but mercifully to open my Eyes, and to help me in correcting whatever in me is yet unreformed.

I repeat the ſame Petition as to all practical Errors, grounded upon Authority and Example, or on their Principles with whom I converſe. Theſe, I fear, are many, becauſe I know how very eaſy Nature is in receiving what is agreeable to it; eſpecially where there appears ſo much of Weight to recommend them. But, whatever they be, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee to diſcover them to me. Take from me all Adheſion to them, and permit them not to uſurp upon my Reaſon. Clear this inward Light in me from all Kinds of Corruption, purify it from all thoſe Clouds and Vapours which hinder it from diſcerning the Truth of what is before it; and never permit it to be bribed by Inclination, or to plead in Favour of that which it ought to condemn.

But what I, above all, aſk of Thee, is true Simplicity of Spirit, and an upright Heart. For obſerving the many Ways there are

are of being deceived, I cannot but apprehend the Occaſion of all ſuch Deceit proceeds from the Corruption of our Hearts, and that this is the Reaſon of our not diſcerning the wrong Judgments we make; nay hence, I fear, we ſhall be inexcuſable in many of our Sins of Ignorance; ſince our own Corruption taking away the Light of diſcerning according to Truth; and this being our own Fault, who cannot but fear, that all the ſinful Ignorance, the Conſequence of ſuch Fault, will be ſeverely charged upon us; ſince whatever we pretend, of being deceived, the Truth is, we have deceived ourſelves?

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to give me an upright Heart, a Heart which favours none of that Corruption, to which Nature inclines, but plainly conſiders every Thing, as it is delivered by Thee, and ſtands recorded in thy Goſpel, and is afraid of all thoſe Gloſſes which corrupt Wit and Example put upon them. Give me a Heart thus ſincere and pure, and then, O God, though I am very weak of myſelf, yet knowing how acceptable this is to Thee, I cannot but hope in the Aſſiſtance of that Light, by which Thou leadeſt the Juſt, and that by this I ſhall be preſerved from all ſinful Deluſion. Give me, O God of Mercy, a ſincere, pure, and upright Heart; for to ſuch Thou communicateſt thy heavenly Light.

DIS-

DISCRETION.

I Acknowledge, O God, many Bleſſings received from thy Hand, for which I here render hearty Thanks to thy Goodneſs, who art thus merciful to me, an unworthy Sinner. But knowing the beſt Gratitude to conſiſt, not in Words, but in the good Uſe of what I have received, I now come to make my Petition to Thee, for an Addition of thy Favours, in the Grant of that Gift which ſeems neceſſary for the good Uſe of all the reſt, and that is, for the Gift of Diſcretion.

For, to own here my Weakneſs before Thee, I confeſs, O Lord, for want of this, inſtead of uſing aright, I abuſe all thy Bleſſings; ſo far, that there is neither Gift of Nature nor of Fortune, of which I do not only often loſe the Benefit I might make, but likewiſe very often turn to Sin. It is the Want of this makes me unhappy, in the Midſt of many Bleſſings; and amongſt the many Difficulties, Troubles, and Uneaſineſs of this Life, the greateſt Part is what I bring upon myſelf, thro' my ill Management and Indiſcretion.

Seeing ſo much Evil from myſelf, I am convinced of my neceſſary and continual Dependance on Thee, my God; I am convinced, both my Sins and Misfortunes will be multiplied to the End of my Life, if Thou, O Lord, art not pleaſed to aſſiſt me, and, by the Spirit of Diſcretion, teach me to prevent the Occaſions of them.

Grant

Grant me, therefore, O God, this Petition: I do not aſk for the Wiſdom of the World, which reaches not beyond what is earthly, and is the Benefit only of a Moment: But I aſk for ſpiritual Diſcretion, by which I may be taught to manage all the Circumſtances of Life aright, whether proſperous, or ſuch as are uneaſy to me, and learn to turn all thy Gifts to the beſt Account, and thus be wiſe to Salvation.

Give me this Diſcretion, in the firſt Place, as to the Uſe of all temporal Bleſſings, ſuch as Health, Time, Plenty, Reputation, Succeſs, *&c.* Theſe are Gifts which may be all ſerviceable to Eternity; and, if abuſed, muſt be the Encreaſe of Judgment; and how eaſily, even to the Loſs of the Soul? Inſtruct me, O Lord, in this Point, and give me Grace, that I may not only conſider how to turn thy Bleſſings to my preſent Satisfaction, but to make it my Study, how to anſwer thoſe Purpoſes here, for which Thou haſt given them, and how to gain Eternity by them.

The ſame I aſk as to all the Trials of Life, and whatever Scourges Thou art pleaſed to ſend. Theſe, by ill Management, may be made the Occaſion of many Sins, and, by a better Uſe, may be the Improvement of the Soul, and ſo many Steps towards Heaven. Grant me, O God, the Grace of this good Huſbandry, that I may not let all that be loſt, or go for nothing, which is capable of being made the Purchaſe of an eternal Kingdom.

The

The ſame Petition I make to Thee, O God, as to my Words; that I may know when, and in what Manner to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent. This would be much for the Peace of my Soul, could I obtain this Diſcretion; it being the Want of this which brings me into frequent Quarrels, and uncharitable Diſputes, with my Neighbours; which creates Variety of Uneaſineſſes with thoſe, with whom I ought to keep a better Correſpondence, and is the Occaſion of daily Sins, ſuch as are known to Thee, O God, and ought to be daily lamented by me.

Wherefore, I now beſeech Thee, O merciful Lord, to remedy all this Unhappineſs in me. Give me Diſcretion for the right Management of my Tongue; let it no longer be at the Command of every little Paſſion, groundleſs Jealouſy, idle Imagination, or peeviſh Humour, much leſs of any ſinful Inclination: It is enough, O God, that I have been hitherto ſo unwiſe: Now, from this Time, let thy holy Grace and Diſcretion govern me. Let me now not only conſider what I have a Mind to ſay, but always aſk, whether it be according to Diſcretion to ſpeak, whether it be juſt and reaſonable, and well-pleaſing to Thee, my God. For having Thee for my God and my Guide, and my Profeſſion being to follow Thee, I am bound to conſult thy Will in all Things. And it is impoſſible for me, not to ſay many indiſcreet, fooliſh, and ſinful Things, if neglecting Thee, who art the only true Wiſdom, I let my Tongue

Tongue be at the Command of every vain, exceptious, or buſy Humour, that deſires to ſet it at work. Deliver me therefore, O God, from this Indiſcretion, and help me to be more wiſe.

Teach me likewiſe, O God, to be diſcreet in all Manner of Converſation; that I may, in every Kind, be under the Reſtraint of a diſcreet Moderation; that I may not be prevailed on by Deſign, Flattery, or ill Example, to ſay or do more than becomes my Profeſſion of a Chriſtian, and the particular Character I have in that Profeſſion. I know my Weakneſs, and how eaſy it is to exceed in theſe Circumſtances, whilſt that which is preſent, is too apt to ſtifle the beſt Principles: But help me, O God, here I beſeech Thee, and keep me within Bounds, that I take no undue Liberties; that I govern my Tongue; that I give Offence to none; that I follow no ill Example, but do all to Edification.

For better Security in this, direct me, I beſeech Thee, in the Choice of my Company, and in this teach me to be diſcreet: I am ſenſible this is a Matter of Concern, and it may very well be, that not only my temporal, but alſo my eternal well-being, depends on this very Point. Grant therefore, O God, I may not here give the whole Choice to Inclination, Humour, or ſome ſuperficial Agreeableneſs, and raſhly go on, where theſe lead me. No, my God, if Thou haſt any Mercy for me, let not this be;

for

for I know, there is no ſurer Way to Diſorder, Folly, Irreligion, and Ruin, than to be indiſcreet in this one Point alone. Teach me, therefore, O God, to be more wiſe, and ſuffer me not to hazard all that ought to be valuable to me, by following a Humour which looks not beyond a few Hours, and leaves Eternity as much to the Venture, as if there were no Faith to over-rule it.

I aſk of Thee again, O God, that I may be diſcreet in the Management of all that belongs to my State; that I may be laborious and watchful, in ſatisfying every Part of my Duty; that it ſuffer in no Kind, either thro' Neglect or exceſſive Solicitude. Preſerve me from all raſh Undertakings; from being too buſy in what does not belong to me; and teach me ſo to bear the Burthen of my State, that no Sort of Diſcouragement may leſſen that Diligence in me which Duty requires.

Grant likewiſe, O God, I may be diſcreet in every Choice I am to make, and in all Buſineſs, not engaging in any Thing raſhly or upon Humour; but conſulting with the moſt experienced, and duly weighing all Circumſtances, and petitioning for thy Direction: Thus may I ever endeavour to prevent all juſt Occaſions of being wiſe too late, or buying it at too dear a Rate.

A like Diſcretion I aſk, in the Government of all my Inclinations, Deſires, Affections, and Paſſions. The Trouble, Miſchief, and Sin of theſe, if not duly moderated, I ſee too plainly, ſo far, as to dread the Experience; I

ſee

ſee them to be Monſters, to be Madneſs, to be the moſt effectual and ſureſt Inſtruments of the Devil. Hence I implore thy Mercy, O God, for my Protection: I aſk thy Grace to direct and ſtrengthen me, that I may not raſhly expoſe myſelf to the Occaſions of raiſing them; that I may not be too confident in the Liberty I give them, preſuming upon my own Strength, and of being better able to govern them than others. This I know to be the Way to Sin; and therefore I beg that my Heart may be always poſſeſſed with a Senſe of my own Weakneſs, with a great Apprehenſion of my own Corruption, with a ſolid Diſtruſt of myſelf; and hence, O God, may it be the conſtant Method of my whole Life; to labour in keeping all my natural Inclinations under Government, and not then only to think of governing them, when, by ill Management and Indiſcretion, I have put them almoſt out of my Power, and provoked Thee to leave me to myſelf.

My Weakneſs ſtill obliges me to renew my Petitions to Thee, O God, in this important Point; and I aſk now, that I may do nothing upon Humour or Paſſion, or make any haſty or raſh Engagements. For I know Humour and Paſſion, not only to be Weakneſſes, but to be very inconſiderate, blind, and raſh; and therefore, that there muſt be the Hazard of daily Indiſcretions, where theſe have any Command. Hence, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may keep theſe natural Evils in due Subjection to Reaſon;

that

that I may ſuſpect all Reſolutions and Propoſals, when Humour or Paſſion are in Motion; that I may be jealous even of what then ſeems reaſonable, and adjourn all final Determinations, till the Return of a Calm, when Things can be better examined, conſulted, and debated. O God, how infinite are the Follies of Judgment corrupted by Humour or Paſſion; and how unhappy muſt I be, if theſe no ſooner begin to appear, but I preſently take them for my Adviſers, my Counſel, and my Guides! What can I expect but Diſturbance, Sin, and Misfortune, to be the Effect of ſuch Folly! And yet, how am I ever inclined and ready to take their Advice! But now, O God, ſince Thou haſt given me a Senſe of this Weakneſs, give me likewiſe Grace to overcome it. Grant I may, for the future, take a better Method, that, by the Light of thy Grace, by the Advice of Friends, and by calm, unbiaſs'd Reaſoning, I may prevent all thoſe ſinful Indiſcretions, to which I muſt be otherwiſe expoſed. Hear me, O God, in this Petition, and let me no more, by my own Raſhneſs, be the Contriver of my own Misfortune.

Deliver me likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, from all that Paſſion, which is the general Effect of eſpouſing any Party; this blinds as much, if not more, than any other, and Reaſon is ſeldom at Liberty where this prevails. Aſſiſt me therefore, O God, againſt this Weakneſs, and permit me to go no farther in any Cauſe, than ſolid Reaſon and Juſtice carry me? So far I may go without Fear; but if Paſſion gets the

the better, I confeſs, O Lord, from the blind Violence of this, I am in Danger of exceeding all that Diſcretion and Juſtice can approve. Help me therefore, O God, and mercifully keep me within the Bounds of Moderation.

Preſerve me in all other Ways, where Indiſcretion leads to Sin; and I moſt earneſtly preſs this Petition to Thee, becauſe I obſerve, amongſt the many Evils which happen in the World, the greater and more conſiderable Part have their Riſe from ſome Indiſcretion. From hence I have ſeen the Ruin of Peace, of Charity, of all good Order, of Reputation, of Eſtate, of Health, of Sobriety, of Religion, and, with too much Reaſon to be feared, of Eternity. And where ſo many Misfortunes attend, have not I Reaſon to fear myſelf, and to ſolicit for thy Help and Direction?

Behold then, O God, a poor, blind, and helpleſs Creature, in the Midſt of many Dangers and Difficulties; I am not able to ſtruggle with the leaſt of them, and a great Part I do not ſo much as foreſee, or apprehend, and yet I am as confident and preſumptuous, as if I was ſecure againſt all Snares or Attempts. Such Boldneſs, joined with ſo much Weakneſs, I own, is a dangerous State, expoſed to endleſs Indiſcretions, if not prevented by thy heavenly Light: Take me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, into thy Protection, direct me, lead me, and make me ſenſible of Dependance on Thee, and let not this unhappy Creature periſh under the Effects of its own Blindneſs.

I am

I am blind and raſh of myſelf, but, through thy Help, I may be enabled to diſcern all Things belonging to my State, and to Eternity.

Indifferency or Tepidity.

AMidſt the many Weakneſſes to which I am ſubject, there is no one gives me a more ſenſible Diſturbance, than to ſee how unconcerned I am, in the Affairs of Salvation, and how little Pains I take in the Performance of thoſe Duties on which my Eternity depends.

And what can I now do here, but complain of my daily Stupidity and Neglects? How ſurprizing are theſe, O God!

If I conſult my Faith, I believe an Eternity to come, which requires, and is worth all my Care, to ſecure it in Happineſs. If I look at my general Practice, I am induſtrious and eager in all that is temporal, and, when the Works of Eternity are to be done, I either put them by, or perform them with ſo much Sloth, as if they were ſomething ceremonial, that were to be done, but did not truly deſerve my Care.

If I conſider Hell, I believe it a State of endleſs Torments; I cry out with the Prophet; Who can dwell with everlaſting Flame? and think, nothing can be done too much to eſape them. If I conſider my Practice, I am, in Earneſt, afraid of temporal Evils, and take true Pains to avoid them; but as for eternal, it is but very little I do to eſcape them, and this too with ſo little Concern, that it looks as if I neither feared nor believed them.

If

If I reflect upon what the Servants of God have done for the Love of their Redeemer, and for gaining Heaven; I applaud their Piety, I commend their Charity, I admire their Watchings, their Labours, and wonderful Patience in their Sufferings; I eſteem them happy for what they did: But when I come to do any Thing, tho' for the ſame God and the ſame Crown, O my God, how poor are my Endeavours! How little do I labour to do like them; as if it were only their Intereſt, and not mine, to be faithful in thy Service!

When I conſider my bleſſed Redeemer, how much he did, how much he ſuffered, of all Kinds, for the Salvation of Man; I ſee Motives enough, to preſs me on, to do whatever I am able to do on my Part. For when God does ſo very much, who is infinitely happy without Man; what is it the Sinner ought not to do for himſelf? And yet, when I come to do any Thing, it is with ſo much Coldneſs, as if Thou, my God, hadſt given me no Encouragement to take Pains it.

This, O God, is the Truth of my Caſe. And am not I now a miſerable, unhappy Creature, who having ſo many Motives, ſo much Intereſt, ſo great a Neceſſity of ſeeking and ſerving Thee, with all the Faculties, Strength, Induſtry, and Life of my Soul, have all this Strength, Induſtry, and Life, ſpent upon this World, and have nothing but a cold Formality, and ſome ceremonial Profeſſions, without Heart or Life, left for Thee!

Ah,

Ah, my God, look upon me in theſe unhappy Circumſtances, and have Compaſſion on me. Give me a ſtronger Faith; a more lively Hope, and a greater Senſe of my Duty. Let not the Vanities and Follies, and little Buſineſſes of this World, thus wholly take up and run away with my poor captive Soul; let not it pine and conſume itſelf under the common Solicitude or Troubles of it. For what will all this avail me? To how little Purpoſe will all this be, when a ſhort Time, that runs away like a Dream, will lay me in the Duſt, and I ſhall have nothing left of all theſe Satisfactions and Troubles, but only the ſinful Part, which will attend me to Thee, my God and my Judge, whom I have offended by them.

Wherefore I beſeech Thee, O God, to correct this ſtrange Diſorder of my Soul. As I believe an Eternity to come, ſo, by the Effect of thy Grace, may this make ſuch an Impreſſion in my Breaſt, that my inward Concern may bear ſome Proportion to it; that, as this is infinitely above all the Affairs of this World, ſo my Solicitude for it may exceed all the Concern I have for earthly Things, which periſh with Time.

Grant this, O merciful God, and let me no more be ſo unjuſt, as to ſeek Earth and Vanity with that Concern which belongs only to Heaven; and then to take no more Care for Heaven than if it were a Trifle. I ſee, O God, the Injuſtice of this Way; I cannot ſee it without Shame; and I wiſh it would leave ſuch a Confuſion upon my Soul, that the

continual Senſe of it might give me no Reſt, till by Prayer and good Endeavours I come to change the Method, and ſeek Heaven with the Solicitude which belongs to Heaven.

Help me, O God, to work this good Effect in my Soul, for till I come to find this Change, till I feel in my Heart ſuch a Senſe of Heaven, as to eſteem the Poſſeſſion of Thee, the moſt valuable and only Good; till I deſire it with the greateſt Earneſtneſs; till I am ſolicitous in ſeeking the moſt effectual Means that lead to it; till I am ſincerely induſtrious in the Uſe of ſuch Means; till I apply my whole Strength, my Watchfulneſs and Soul for this ſame End; till I can diſcover this, I fear I am in a ſinful State; ſince the whole Method of my Life is an Offence againſt the higheſt Juſtice, even that Juſtice which is due to Thee.

And what then muſt it be, if inſtead of this Earneſtneſs, this ſincere Deſire, Watchfulneſs, Induſtry, and Labour, I find nothing but Coldneſs, Indifferency, Sloth, and a general Neglect? This muſt certainly be notoriouſly criminal in the Tranſgreſſion of this ſame Juſtice, and in the Violation of thoſe two great Precepts, wherein we are commanded to *love Thee with all our Hearts*, and to *ſeek firſt*, and above all Things, *thy Kingdom*. And is this then a State becoming one, who lives in Hopes of Happineſs?

O God, Thou ſeeſt how it is with me? Thou ſeeſt my Unhappineſs, and knoweſt my Deſires. Be ſo merciful then, I beſeech Thee,

to

to thy Servant, as to touch my Heart with a Coal from the Altar, and communicate to it a new Life; ſuch Life, as may baniſh from it all that Coldneſs and Want of Concern, to which it is too viſibly ſubject. I ſee the Sinfulneſs of this State, and now implore thy Grace, to be delivered from it.

For this End, I beſeech Thee, to inflame my Soul with the Love of Thee, my God; quicken in my Heart a ſincere Deſire of poſſeſſing Thee; let the Zeal of Heaven damp all other Deſires; give me Life and Vigour in all the Duties of Eternity, and make me forward in embracing whatever is likely to advance me towards my laſt End.

May I be ever mindful, in all the Exerciſes of Eternity, to employ and raiſe my Endeavours, in Proportion to that weighty Concern; and therefore, not to perform them with a lazy Indifferency, as in a Matter of no Moment, but by ſummoning all my Strength even according to that Precept, wherein Thou haſt obliged me, to love Thee with all my Soul, and with all my Strength.

To help me in this, let the Zeal for my Salvation, in the Sufferings of my Redeemer, be an Encouragement to my dull Soul; let the Example of thy Servants excite me; let Hell-fire be a Spur to me; let the Uncertainty of Life, and the Certainty of never more returning, keep my Soul awake; and let the ſhort Duration of all temporal Things ſhew me every Day the Folly, of giving my Soul more to them, than to Eternity.

This I earneſtly beg of thy Mercy, becauſe it is a Reproach to my Conſcience, to ſee that I have all Life, Vigour, and Attention, in every Thing belonging to this World, and am only then cold and dull, when I come to Thee. Help me therefore, O God, to take away this Reproach from my Soul; for to be alive in the World, to which I ought to be dead; and to be dead to Thee, to whom I ought to live, is exactly contrary to what I am taught in the Goſpel of my Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore is an Indiſpoſition of Soul not to be tolerated in a Chriſtian.

Heal me therefore, O God, and give me a new Spirit. Thou who madeſt the hard Rock become a Spring of living Water, who haſt quickened Duſt and Clay into a living Creature, who madeſt the dead Bones to live; by the ſame Power canſt remove all the Dullneſs of my Soul, and quicken it again with a new Life. Shew this Power, O God, and now command my Soul to live, and ſo to live, that it may manifeſt its Life, in whatever belongs to thy Service, and the Work of my Salvation.

Let this Life, O God, appear in the good Endeavours I am to uſe on my Part; for here, I fear, is my great Fault; that I take no Pains, I do not ſtrive to do what belongs to me: Give me Grace, therefore, to be more careful and zealous in all the Exerciſes of Religion; that, as often as I perform them, I may apply all my Soul, and all my Strength, to perform them well; that I may with Vigour ſhake

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off all Heavineſs, Coldneſs, and Diſtraction, and ſhew Life in whatever Thing belongs to Thee, who gaveſt it. Thou, O God, art the Author of Life to me, and ſhall I employ all this to every Thing elſe beſides thee? Deliver me, O God, from this Injuſtice.

JUSTICE.

HERE, in thy Preſence, I acknowledge many Debts, which I am obliged to ſatisfy; but being ſo very poor as I am, I make my Application to the Treaſure of thy infinite Goodneſs, O God, with Hopes that Thou wilt conſider my Neceſſities, and by thy Grace contribute to my Relief.

My firſt and greateſt Debt is to Thee, my God, in the Love, Fidelity, Homage, Service, and Gratitude which I owe Thee: The leaſt Part of this I am not able to ſatisfy, being a helpleſs and contemptible Worm. Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, and let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, at all Times, to be mindful of this manifold Debt, to be ever deſirous, and even ſolicitous, to diſcharge whatever Part is in my Power, and every Day to implore thy Goodneſs to my Aſſiſtance, both to enable me, and give me Diſcretion, for improving every Opportunity that offers, for ſatisfying any Part of the many Duties which I owe Thee.

I have a ſecond Debt to my Soul, to ſuperintend, and be watchful in all its Affairs; to preſerve it from all that can be injurious to it;

from the Dangers and Occaſions of Sin; from all that is infectious and poiſonous; from Sin, and from the worſt of all Misfortunes, which is its eternal Separation from God, and being caſt into Hell. I am, beſides this, bound to procure it the Poſſeſſion of that Good, for which it was created, and for this End, to lead it on, in all thoſe Exerciſes and Ways, which Thou haſt preſcribed for gaining this Inheritance. But what of all this can I do, without thy Help, O God? Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, in ſatisfying this Part of Juſtice, in diſcharging this great Truſt Thou haſt left with me.

I have a third Debt to my Body, to preſerve and recover its Health, to decline whatever is evidently prejudicial to it, to reſtrain its undue Inclinations, and keep it within ſuch Bounds, as may be proper for arriving to its laſt End. This is another Truſt, which is attended with many Difficulties; but it being what Juſtice requires, I beg thy Grace, O God, that no Difficulties may hinder me, in being faithful to what is thus demanded of me.

I have another Debt to all thoſe who have any Superiority over me, whether ſpiritual or temporal; ſo as to be wanting in no Submiſſion or Obedience, which Authority can lawfully require: Be Thou my Helper again in this Point, O God, and by thy Grace may I be enabled to give every one their Due; permit no factious or ſtubborn Humour to prevail in me, to the Diſturbance of Order and Peace, which I am bound to maintain. Let no Diſ-

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agreeableneſs of thoſe over me, or any undue Methods they take, provoke me to tranſgreſs my Duty; but let it be my conſtant Practice, rather to ſuffer, than do any Evil. This requires thy aſſiſting Grace to ſupport me in Moderation and Patience; therefore I now beg it of Thee, that, whether in Government or Families, it may be my Rule to do this Juſtice.

I have another Debt to the Perſons under my Charge, which obliges me to a manifold Care, both as to Soul and Body: I beſeech Thee, in the firſt Place, to give me a due Senſe of this Obligation; and then, O God, let thy Grace carry me on with ſuch Watchfulneſs and Induſtry, as are neceſſary for the juſt performing it. There are many Duties under this Head, which a careleſs Eye may eaſily overlook, and Variety of Corruption will concur, for the paſſing them by with Neglect: But, O God, ſince this cannot be, but with the Tranſgreſſion of Juſtice, I beſeech Thee, let it not be my Sin.

I have another Debt, as to the Things under my Care; ſince whatever I poſſeſs, I only hold, as Steward under Thee, O God, who art Sovereign Lord of all; and hence I am bound, firſt, as to the Inſpection, Care, and good Management of all whatever is entruſted with me: Secondly, As to the employing or diſpoſing of it, in anſwering thoſe Ends and Purpoſes, for which it is depoſited in my Hands; for as to both theſe, I am certainly to give an Account of my Stewardſhip. O God, are theſe the Demands of Juſtice?

How little have I thought of them? How great has been my Neglect of them? Unhappy then am I in thoſe very Things in which I eſteem myſelf happy. But let it be no more ſo, O Lord, I beſeech Thee: Aſſiſt me in this difficult Taſk, where Nature, and the World, contrive ſo many Ways to carry me out of the Ways of Juſtice. Grant me Strength and Diſcretion to ſtand againſt both, and may I now make it my daily Buſineſs carefully to inſpect, and, according to thy own Orders, to diſpoſe whatever is in my Care; that ſo, when thy Juſtice ſhall call me to an Account, I may not be condemned, either of Neglect or of Waſte. Help me, O God, in this, for, again I confeſs, I want thy daily Help.

I have another Debt to thoſe to whom I owe Money, and I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may make it my conſtant Practice to ſatisfy this, according to the beſt of my Ability, and never be wanting in it, thro' any faulty Omiſſion. I know how ſtrictly Thou haſt commanded this, as to paying the Wages of all thoſe that are hired: It is thy poſitive Precept; and Thou haſt declared by thy Apoſtle, that if any of theſe are defrauded, their Cry ſhall aſcend before Thee, to their Puniſhment, who are the Occaſion of it. Permit me not therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to wrong my Neighbour by this Injuſtice, and provoke thy Diſpleaſure againſt me.

I know likewiſe, how great an Injuſtice it may be, in not paying others, where Money is due; eſpecially where the Want of ſuch

Payments

Payments is the Occaſion of very conſiderable Inconveniencies, both as to Buſineſs and Family, and too often Ruin. What the Conſequences of ſuch Omiſſions are, No-body can tell but thoſe that feel them: But ſo much of Injuſtice I ſee there is in Perſons ſuffering for Want of their own, whilſt others detain what is theirs, even againſt their Wills, that I beg Thee to preſerve me from doing them and myſelf ſo much Miſchief.

I beg that I may never thus unjuſtly eat of others Labours, and rob them of what is the Fruit of their Sweat, and ought to be the Supply of their Families. For what is this, but taking the Bread out of their Mouths, and living by Plundering and Oppreſſion! O God, rather let me ſuffer any Inconveniences, than be thus unjuſt and cruel. Let Vanity and Appetite be denied in all their ſuperfluous Demands, let State and Intemperance ſink under all Kinds of Self-denials, rather than my Neighbour, in the leaſt, be wronged for their Support.

I hope, O Lord, if being engaged in Debt, I do what I am able to pay it; if I am truly deſirous to do Juſtice; if I contrive all Ways to ſpare from myſelf, and cut off all unneceſſary Expences, that I may do Right to my Neighbour; I hope, in this Caſe, I ſatisfy a good Conſcience, and ſhall find Mercy with Thee, for whatever is not in my Power to do. But if, inſtead of being ſolicitous to do this Juſtice, I ſtill go on with Extravagancies, courting my own Humour, and letting Idleneſs and Intemperance run me

farther in Debt; if I maintain my Vanity at my Neighbour's Expence, and value not what Miſchief I do him, ſo I pleaſe but myſelf; O God, how deſperate then muſt my Condition be, ſince it is too plain I neither fear God, nor love my Neighbour: Since it is plain I have more Regard to my own Humour or Vice, than to all thy Commands, and that I ſeek no farther Happineſs, than here to follow my own Ways! This is a Caſe to be lamented and feared; and, O God, I now implore thy Mercy to preſerve me from it, that, heartily repenting of all paſt ill Management, I may be ſolicitous to diſcharge all the Debts I have contracted, and never, for the future, think of other Expences, but what I am able, and, without Delay, take Care to ſatisfy.

As for all other Kinds of Juſtice, whether temporal or ſpiritual, whether in Regard of my particular State, or of any Truſt or Charge I have undertaken, or in whatever other Way it be, I beſeech Thee, O God, that I may be faithful in it. And, for this End, I beg of Thee a true Senſe of Juſtice, as far as it belongs to me; that I may not be deceived in this Point by the general Practice of others, or the common Method of the World; becauſe I have too much Reaſon to fear, that Practice is very corrupt, and pretends to warrant many Things which will not be allowed by Thee. Wherefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, to direct me by a better Light, even that Light which cannot deceive. Let this, O God, ever ſhine upon me, and be my Guide,

Guide, amidſt the many Difficulties and Temptations of this Life. Theſe are very powerful in deceiving; and while, of myſelf, I am ſo weak, and have ſo much preſent Intereſt in being deceived, what Security can I have againſt their Suggeſtions, if Thou, O God, art not ſo merciful, as to command thy Light to ſhine upon me, amidſt ſo much Darkneſs? Be a Guide therefore to me, I beſeech Thee, and ſuffer me not to be deluded by ſuch Reaſons, as are according to the World, but not according to thy Law. Give me Grace to examine and conſider every Thing in ſuch a Manner, as Juſtice requires, and not to think every Thing warranted, which I ſee done by others; ſince they being but few, whom Thou haſt choſen, there cannot be many, whoſe Example is to be followed.

Grant likewiſe, O God, that having a Senſe of that which is truly right and juſt, according to the Standard of the Goſpel, I may have Reſolution and Strength to follow it. And now here, O God, how great Reaſon have I to implore thy powerful Aſſiſtance againſt my own Weakneſs, and the many Temptations to which I am expoſed: Againſt the Temptations of Intereſt and Favour, of Dependance and Flattery, of Paſſion and Party, beſides infinite others; which particular Circumſtances lay before me? I muſt confeſs my Weakneſs; theſe preſs ſtrongly upon me; and having many plauſible Arguments, ſeemingly to prove the Reaſonableneſs of what they pretend, I am in Danger

of

of being carried away, where Juſtice obliges me to reſiſt. Aſſiſt me therefore, I beſeech Thee, and let not Iniquity prevail againſt me; ſtrengthen me againſt all theſe Temptations, that I never do any Injuſtice by their Perſuaſion. To give Ear to and follow them, is doing what Thou haſt forbidden: It is wronging my Neighbour, whom Thou haſt commanded me to love as myſelf; it is conſulting ſome preſent Convenience, and for ſuch Convenience deſpiſing Eternity. Deliver me, O God, from all ſuch Raſhneſs, and may I rather chuſe to renounce all preſent Conveniencies, than hazard my eternal Lot, by doing what is unjuſt.

GRIEF.

BEhold here a poor Petitioner, O God, who wants thy Aſſiſtance; but ſuch is my Unhappineſs, the more I want, the leſs able I am to aſk for Relief; have Regard therefore to my diſtreſſed Condition, and, according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, have Compaſſion on me.

Conſider my Circumſtances, O God, and my great Weakneſs: See how low my Soul is ſunk, and how heavy is the Weight that oppreſſes it, There is neither Light nor Comfort left within me; I am weak and helpleſs, and fall under my Burthen, if Thou O Lord, doſt not ſhew Mercy and comfort me. Appear then in my Cauſe, O God, and be my Refuge and my Support.

I feel

I feel my Soul is almoſt overwhelmed with Grief; but, from under this Weight and Darkneſs, I cry out to Thee, O Lord, to be my Helper. Come then, O God of Mercy, and help me, though unworthy of the Help which I aſk. Give me Strength at preſent againſt this Paſſion, that it may no longer prevail upon me; give me Strength againſt my own Inclination, that I may not lie down ſullen or deſponding, under the Trouble that oppreſſes me. I am ſenſible this is a great Weakneſs, and therefore I implore thy Grace, that, by this divine Aid, I may overcome Nature, and let Reaſon and Faith wholly govern in me.

And now, my Soul, conſider if thou canſt, whether there can be any Reaſon for thee thus to let Grief grow to this Exceſs.

It is true, thou haſt had ſome Trouble befal thee, and if thou canſt find any Relief, there is Reaſon enough to ſeek it.

But tell me, will afflicting thyſelf, in this Exceſs, be any Help to thee?

Will this take away, or remedy, the Occaſion of thy Complaints?

It will injure thy Health, weaken thy Memory, darken thy Underſtanding, and, if long indulged, will bring thee into ſuch an ill Habit, as may never more be recovered.

Tell me then; can this be according to Reaſon, to indulge that which muſt certainly do thee Harm, and can do no Good?

Reaſon directs thee to uſe ſuch Means as have any Likelihood of affording thee Help; but

but to add to thy own Misfortunes, whilſt thou complaineſt of being already too miſerable, this cannot be according to Reaſon.

Thou ſinkeſt under thy preſent Burthen, becauſe of its Weight and thy own Weakneſs: And muſt it not then be very unreaſonable in thee, ſtill more and more to diſable thyſelf by immoderate grieving, and, by the ſame ill Management, every Day to add more Weight to the Burthen?

See then what thou doſt; for thou art certainly doing an irrational Thing, and haſt nothing but Humour, or the Violence of a blind Paſſion, to direct and encourage thee in it; and all the Benefits thou wilt have by it, will be to do thyſelf Miſchief.

If thou goeſt on then in this Manner, thou renounceſt thy Reaſon, which is to act like one that is mad: And much more thou layeſt by thy Faith, which is to act as an Infidel.

For reflect a little: Does not Faith teach thee, that the Will of God muſt be done in all Things?

Does it not require thee to bow down, and ſubmit to all his Orders?

Does it not preſcribe thee to bear with Patience every Trouble, and to humble thyſelf under the Scourge?

Does it not order thee to take up thy Croſs, and follow thy Redeemer; and to learn of him how thou art to ſuffer?

Does it not direct thee to have Recourſe to God in thy Affliction, and to ſeek from him both Comfort and Help in thy Trouble?

Does

Does it not call upon thee to lift up thy Eyes to that eternal Crown, which God has prepared for thoſe that ſuffer?

Does it not teach Thee, that Correction from God's Hand is an Argument of his Love; that by Tribulations the Juſt are purified; that they are the Proof of their Fidelity; that by them they are aſſociated to Chriſt, their Head; and that, if they ſuffer with him, they ſhall be glorified with him?

Does it not hence require of thee to deny thyſelf, not to yield to thy Inclination; but, inſtead of grieving, to have Comfort, and even to rejoice in Trouble, in Expectation of the Promiſes?

In this Manner Faith teaches thee; and thus they endeavour to do who are directed by Faith.

But what doſt thou, my Soul?

O my God, I confeſs, I follow neither Reaſon nor Faith; I neglect or ſmother both theſe Lights, and give Way to Paſſion, which is contrary to both.

I yield to Inclination, and let this carry me on, without conſidering what is my Duty.

And if any Glimpſe of it, through thy Mercy, ſtrikes my Soul, yet I am too ſlothful to follow it; Paſſion or Humour ſtill prevails, and I am careleſs as to every Thing that is really for my Good.

Thus I live, diſpleaſed with what Thou haſt been pleaſed to order; and my indulged Grief is a Rebellion againſt thy Will, O God.

Inſtead of ſeeking Help from Thee, I make myſelf incapable of aſking thy Help.

Inſtead of moving Thee to Compaſſion by my Affliction, I provoke thy Anger by my ſtubborn Impatience.

Inſtead of improving under my Trouble, I prevent all the Deſigns of thy Mercy, and even there add new Sins, where thy Goodneſs has given me an Opportunity of cancelling the old.

Thus, O God, while I profeſs myſelf a Chriſtian, I go on in a Way contrary to what my Redeemer has taught; and ſuch as cannot fail of being injurious both to Soul and Body.

This is my preſent State, more unhappy to me, thro' my own Impatience and ill Management, than in that which is the Subject of my Complaints.

Help me therefore, O God, and mercifully deliver me from this Unhappineſs.

Give me Grace to ſtand againſt my Inclination, and effectually to ſuppreſs my Paſſion.

Let me no more give Way to Grief, but learn now to embrace thy Will.

Let me now hearken to Reaſon, and no longer open my Breaſt to that, which can be to no other Purpoſe but to do myſelf Harm. Let me now be under the Government of Faith, and not only ſubmit to that as beſt, which is thy Appointment, but likewiſe endeavour to make the beſt Uſe of it.

Teach me to receive Troubles, as the Portion of thy only Son, and of thoſe who were choſen by him out of the World, to be his Friends as well as Servants.

Raiſe

Raiſe up my Heart in the lively Faith of eternal Happineſs to come, and, by the powerful Influence of this, may I find Comfort, and even rejoice in whatever may be a Means of ſecuring to me that Inheritance.

All Kinds of Afflictions may be ſuch Means; why then, my Soul, doſt thou lie ſtill and grieve, when, by good Endeavours, the very Subject of thy Trouble may help thee on towards Heaven.

Awake then, ariſe, take Pains, ſhake off this Paſſion, uſe ſome Violence with thyſelf; for thy Redeemer has taught thee Heaven is to be ſo gained.

O God, who ſeeſt my Weakneſs and my Trouble, have Pity on me: Thou art the Comforter of the Afflicted, the Protector of the Orphan and Widow; to Thee I appeal for Help. Shew Mercy therefore, I beſeech Thee, to thy Servant, and give me Grace to overcome my preſent Diſorder. Aſſiſt me in throwing off Paſſion, which is ſo contrary to the Humility and Patience of the Goſpel. Grant me ſome Portion of that better Spirit which appears thro' all the Paſſion of my Redeemer; and, as far as I am to ſuffer, let it not be any more with Murmuring and rebellious Reſentments, which is the Reſemblance of Hell; but with that pious and humble Submiſſion which is recommended in thy Goſpel, as the beſt Expedient for gaining of Heaven.

Oppreſſion, Melancholy.

BEhold here, O God, a poor unhappy Soul before Thee, under many Difficulties of Spirit, ſuch as deſerve thy Compaſſion, and require thy Help. Look upon me therefore, I beſeech Thee, and do ſomething for my Relief: For behold, O God, I am miſerable.

I am miſerable in the Weight which oppreſſes my Soul, and deprive me of all Comfort in thoſe Clouds and Darkneſs which ſo often hang over me, and leave me without all inward Light.

In looking at nothing but my own Misfortunes, and forgetting the many Bleſſings of thy bountiful Hand, ſuch as would make others happy, and oblige them to a chearful Gratitude.

In buſying myſelf with vain Imaginations, or lying ſtill under a lethargick Sloth, as if I had no Power to move, and thus loſing all the Advantage of the preſent Time.

In creating to myſelf Variety of Misfortunes by groundleſs Fears, and the working of a reſtleſs Fancy; and letting the Apprehenſion of what is not, rob me of the Comfort of whatever I enjoy.

In the Injury I do my Health, and making myſelf incapable of many good Offices, and even Duties, which belong to my State.

In the many Diſturbances I give myſelf by my jealous and exceptious Temper; being ever ready to give the worſt Turn to every Thing I hear or ſee; and this with as much Induſtry as if I had an Intereſt in making myſelf uneaſy.

In

In the great Indiſpoſition in which I am, as to all ſpiritual Exerciſes; ſo as to pray without Attention, and read without Benefit.

In the great Perplexity of Conſcience, which is a continual Diſturbance to me.

In the endleſs Temptations in which I am involved; there being nothing ſo ſecure, or ſacred, which is not attempted by my preſuming and roving Thoughts.

In the Danger of ſeeking undue Means, upon the Pretext of finding Relief.

In not having Courage to undertake ſuch Methods as are for my Good, much leſs to perſevere in the Uſe of them.

In indulging my Diſtemper, and every Day, by my Indiſcretion, Sloth, or Affectation, adding Strength to that which is my general Hindrance in all Good, both as to Soul and Body.

In waſting my Thoughts, Life, and Solicitude, upon my own Aggrievances, and neglecting the great Work of Eternity.

This, O God, is ſome Part of my Miſery; and now I appeal to thy Goodneſs, to have Compaſſion on me, and to heal my diſtempered Mind. All that is within me is ſubject to Thee, and, if Thou wilt, Thou canſt command me to be whole. But being ſo unworthy a Sinner, I cannot expect ſuch miraculous Favours; and therefore I only petition for thy Help.

Help me, O God, I beſeech Thee, that I may have a due Senſe of my Indiſpoſition; and mercifully grant, that I may never more wilfully yield to it, or, thro' my Fault, encreaſe it, ſince it muſt certainly be a great Fault in

me

me, to promote what is ſo very injurious to me.

Grant I may be ever watchful againſt the firſt Approaches of it, and be jealous of all thoſe Thoughts which inſenſibly draw me into it.

Give me new Life and Vigour of Spirit, that, in whatever Degree this Evil ſhall at any Time ſeize me, I may reſolutely ſtand againſt it, and uſe all poſſible Means to diſengage myſelf.

Grant, I beſeech Thee, that, in ſuch Caſe, I may never lie ſtill, and, thro' Sloth, give Opportunity to the Evil to grow upon me; but that I may ſtart, as upon the Surprize of an Enemy, and, by Violence, ſtrive to regain my Liberty.

Grant I may be afraid of all idle Amuſements as of a treacherous Enemy; and, as for all Kinds of terrifying or dejecting Imaginations, O God, I beg thy Aſſiſtance, that I may caſt theſe off with the ſame Concern as if they were the fouleſt and moſt deteſtable of all Temptations.

Let me not here, O God, be drawn in, however innocent and reaſonable they may pretend to be; ſince I have too often experienced the Miſchiefs that are uſhered in by ſuch Innocence.

Let me then be afraid of all that looks like Sloth, ſince this is both a Symptom and Effect of the Diſtemper, and can be no otherwiſe indulged, but with the Unreaſonableneſs of thoſe who make much of a Diſeaſe, while they complain againſt it.

Grant

Grant I may then ſummon all my Reſolution, and, even againſt Inclination, turn to ſome Buſineſs, Labour, or Employment, ſuch as may require both my Hands and my Thoughts; and, O God, I beſeech Thee, let no lazy Suggeſtion of Sleep, or Sloth, then take Place.

And when this cannot be, may I then be ſo wiſe as to chooſe ſuch other Helps as can be had, for removing afflicting and injurious Thoughts; may I turn to Reading, Converſation, or Divertiſement; any Thing that is innocent, rather than ſit ſtill, and join with my Enemy againſt myſelf. But if, notwithſtanding my beſt Endeavours, it ſo happens, by thy Permiſſion, that I cannot diſengage myſelf, and remove the Weight that oppreſſes:

Then, O Lord, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, let thy Grace help my Infirmity, that I may receive it with the ſame Submiſſion and Patience which I am bound to have in all other outward Troubles.

May I conſider it as the Appointment of thy Will; as the Execution of thy Juſtice againſt a Sinner; as the Croſs which Thou art pleaſed I ſhould bear; as the Effect and Puniſhment of Sin.

Thus, O God, may I look upon every uneaſy Thought; all the Heavineſs and inward Oppreſſion which I feel, and whatever elſe of Darkneſs, Temptations, or Terrors, perplex my Mind.

Hence, inſtead of Impatience or Dejection, may it be my conſtant Endeavour to raiſe up my

my Mind from under ſuch Weight, and look towards Thee; towards Thee, my God, who exerciſeſt thy Servants, in ſuch a Manner as Thou pleaſeſt, and appointeſt all for their Good.

May I, in all ſuch Weights, conſider thy holy Will; and that, as I am thy Creature, and a Chriſtian, I am bound to ſubmit to it with an humble and patient Mind.

And, if it be not according to Inclination, to be thus humble and patient, may thy Grace help me in taking Pains to be ſo; and make me bow down to the Ground, even when I am unwilling to ſtir, and, upon my Knees, ſurrender myſelf to thy holy Will. Lord, thy Will be done.

Nay, O God, I petition for thy Help in a farther Duty; that I may not only ſubmit with Patience, but even endeavour to receive with Comfort every Weight, inaſmuch as it is according to thy bleſſed Will; becauſe I know it my Duty to rejoice in every Thing that is the Accompliſhment of thy Will.

This, O God, requires thy aſſiſting Grace; but ſince I find others, my Fellow-ſervants, and made of the ſame infirm Clay with myſelf, to have rejoiced in Tribulation, to have had Comfort in the Midſt of the ſevereſt Torments, and the Terrors of Death, I hope I may ſo far obtain thy Help, as to find Comfort under my leſſer Trials, which are nothing, if compared to what they ſuffered. Grant therefore, O God, this Grace to me alſo, tho' unworthy, that as often as my Heart is ſinking, or oppreſſed with Horror and Darkneſs, I may then raiſe

raiſe it with Vigour and Violence up to Thee, and, offering to thee a Sacrifice of all I feel, endeavour to rejoice, and go on with Comfort under my Croſs. O God, how happy ſhould I be, could I make ſuch an Offering of all my inward Trouble, and now begin to approach towards Heaven, by that which hitherto has been to me ſo great an Hindrance!

Aſſiſt me, O God, I beſeech Thee, under this my Infirmity, and let it not be to me a Sin. Deliver me from it, if it be thy bleſſed Will; but, if Thou art pleaſed it ſhould be ſtill my Exerciſe, teach me, O God of Mercy, and help me to bear it. Give me Courage and Patience under all my Difficulties, that I neither offend thro' Impatience, nor fall into any Diſcouragement. Give me Diſcretion, and the true Wiſdom of thy holy Spirit, that I may let the Enemy take no Advantage of my Trouble; but that I may ſuffer all in the Spirit of thy only Son, and improve under my Affliction. Strengthen my Faith and my Hope amidſt all Temptations and Terrors; and, when all ſeems to be loſt, let me then experience, by freſh Succours and Comforts, that Thou art my God. Give me Grace for the Performance of every Part of my Duty, and help me to ſtand againſt all thoſe Arguments which would perſuade me that what I do is to no Purpoſe. Thou knoweſt, O God, all my Uneaſineſs, my Weakneſs, and my Wants: Forſake me not, I beſeech Thee, in my Diſtreſs, but have Compaſſion on me; take me into thy Protection, and ſupport me according to my Neceſſities,

ſities, and then deal with me as Thou wilt. I aſk neither for Eaſe, nor Comforts, nor Light, but entirely ſurrender myſelf into thy Hands: Lord, thy Will be done in me; carry me thro' whatever uneaſy Ways Thou pleaſeſt, this one Thing alone I aſk of Thee, that Thou forſake me not, but continue thy Helps ever to me, according to my Wants. Lord, thy Will be done in me: And now, for the future, may I take all whatever Uneaſineſs I feel as the fulfilling of thy Will.

Scruples.

MY Neceſſities oblige me to appeal to Thee, O God of Mercy, and to lay before Thee all my Complaints. Turn thy Eyes therefore towards me, I beſeech Thee, and have Regard to my Unhappineſs.

My Soul is under great Diſquiets; I have little Light or Comfort in all I do. I ſeek to have Reſt in Thee, but cannot find it. I endeavour to approach to Thee in Prayer, but a heavy Darkneſs keeps me at a Diſtance from Thee. I often propoſe, by Repentance, to make my Peace with Thee; but ſo many ſurprizing Difficulties perplex my Mind, that, inſtead of repenting, I find nothing but inward Diſturbance and Confuſion, and thus ſeem fruſtrated in all I propoſed. I come likewiſe to the Table of my Lord, and, in thoſe ſacred Myſteries, hope to to receive new Life; but even there, likewiſe, ſacrilegious Fears pro-

phane

phane that Place, and rob me of all the Comforts of that divine Ordinance.

Thus, O God, whatever I do ſeems all loſt, and without Effect; Peace and Comfort are Strangers to my Soul; Fears, Terrors, and ſtrange Apprehenſions are my Entertainment Day and Night; my Thoughts are reſtleſs, and all thoſe Helps which, by thy own Appointment, are Means of Comfort to all others, to me afford Matter for new Diſquiets.

This, O God, is the State of my diſordered Soul; unhappy in being ſubject to daily Uneaſineſs; but more unhappy in being deprived both of the Comfort and Benefit of all thoſe Exerciſes and Devotions in which pious Souls receive the Enlargements of thy Grace, and make their Approaches to Thee.

And what now can I do, except Thou, O God, wilt ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and help me in this Diſtreſs? Give ear then to my Prayer, O moſt gracious Lord, and grant my Petition.

Confirm me, I beſeech Thee, in my Deſire and Reſolution of being faithful to Thee, and of carefully performing whatever my Duty demands of me; but, while I aſk for Fidelity and Attention, deliver me, O moſt merciful Lord, from that exceſſive Solicitude which is ſo great a Diſturbance to me, and from all my immoderate Fears, which are ſo dangerous a Snare to my Soul, and ſo often put me on the Rack.

And ſince I am ſo very often perplexed in Conſcience, that I am almoſt in Deſpair, as to my preſent State, and, looking forward, I ſee no Hopes of doing better, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to grant me the true Spirit of Obedience, that I may ſubmit to their Direction, who, by thy Ordinance, are put over me; that, being helpleſs of myſelf, and not ſeeing the Way, I may receive the Benefit of their Conduct.

For this End I, with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, beg of Thee to take from me all Self-conceit, and too poſitive Adheſion to my own Thoughts; becauſe I am very ſenſible, the Benefit of a Guide is loſt where theſe Evils diſcompoſe the Mind; and I need no more, for being deprived of the Advantage of the beſt Advice, than to be too ſtrongly poſſeſſed with my own Opinion.

In this Caſe, therefore, where my Infirmity is ſuch as to ſtand in Need of the beſt Advice, grant, I beſeech Thee, that I may not, through my own Fault, or Affectation, render all Advice uſeleſs to me. If this has been hitherto one of my Weakneſſes, I now heartily implore thy Mercy for the removing it; for I ſee it to be abſolutely contrary to the Diſcipline which Thou haſt appointed for the Government of thy Faithful, and enough to obſtruct all that Good thy Piety has deſigned in the Remedy of all my Diſtempers.

Since, therefore, it is ſo great a Temptation, ſo dangerous a Snare, it is plain I cannot hearken to it, but by being my own Ene-

my,

my, in doing myſelf the greateſt Prejudice, in the greateſt of all Concerns, in the Government and Peace of my Soul. Help me therefore, O merciful God, and deliver me from all that Poſitiveneſs of Judgment, Affectation, or whatever elſe it has been, which has hitherto done me this great Injury, and even rendered ineffectual in me the moſt conſiderable of thy Mercies. Grant me a true Humility of Judgment, ſuch as may make me eaſy in hearing and ſubmitting, where Thou haſt commanded it for my own Good.

That I may be thus happy, grant, I beſeech Thee, I may be watchful againſt my own exceſſive Fears, and jealous of all their Suggeſtions, however conſcientious and pious they may ſeem. For though there be a Fear, which is helpful to Salvation, yet, I ſee too, there are immoderate Fears very prejudicial to it, and ſuch as I cannot follow, without being put out of, or hindered in the Way, For, when Fears go ſo far as to perplex and darken the Judgment, to ſink the Spirits, cauſe great Diſcouragements, confound the Thoughts, and ſo far to queſtion the Ordinances of God, as to ſuppoſe it unſafe to follow their Direction; it is very plain (judging of the Tree by the Fruit) that ſuch Fears cannot be the Fear of the Lord, which is the Beginning of Wiſdom; but the Fear of Weakneſs, the Root and Occaſion of very great Indiſcretions.

Wherefore I again repeat my Petition to Thee, O God, and moſt humbly pray Thee

to deliver me from all ſuch hurtful Fears, or, at leaſt, ſo far to ſtrengthen me, as to prevent my being deluded, or miſled by them.

This I beg the more earneſtly, becauſe I know how unqualified I am, at the beſt, for making a right Judgment of Things of this difficult Nature, and how eaſily I am miſtaken: And therefore, how much more muſt I be ſo, when my Mind is diſturbed with Fears, and, by terrifying Apprehenſions, put into Diſorder; when working Imaginations confound my Thoughts, and I am under ſuch Perplexity, that I know not how to diſtinguiſh between Shadows and real Evils? Being thus diſturbed, how can I hope to judge aright? How can I hope it, when all the Faculties of my Soul, by which I am to judge, are diſcompoſed, and quite unfitted for diſcerning any Thing before them.

This is certainly the Caſe: And how unreaſonable then muſt my Proceeding be, not only, at ſuch Times, to undertake to judge, but even to judge of ſuch Matters as require the calmeſt Thoughts, and the moſt diſcerning Eye; and not only ſo, but even to queſtion the Judgment of thoſe who are both better qualified, and appointed by Thee to judge; to diſpute their Sentiments; to fear they are miſtaken; and to appeal from their poſitive Judgments to my own Fears?

I muſt confeſs, O God, here is ſomething very raſh, preſumptuous, and fooliſh in this, to ſet this Value upon my own diſtempered Mind, and ſo to give this the Preference

ference to thy Appointments as to have no Confidence in whatever Thou haſt ſet over me, whenever they diſagree with my Fears: This is diſapproving thy Conduct, and then chuſing a blind Guide. O God, I ſee the Folly of this Method, and that there is nothing in it, that can or ought to be depended on; and I cannot wonder at the ill Effects, I find in myſelf, of ſuch ill Management; ſince 'tis but juſt I ſhould thus pay for my bold Indiſcretion, which, ſcrupling to ſubmit to thy Orders, is but one Degree from deſpiſing Thee.

It being thus with me, O God, I now here own all my Faults, my ill Management, my Raſhneſs, my Indiſcretion, my Pride and Poſitiveneſs; and I heartily lament all the ill Effects in me of this ill Method I have taken. I hope thy Goodneſs will not charge them all upon me, ſince Thou knoweſt them to proceed from Weakneſs, and from an ill managed Deſire of doing my Duty. Pardon me, however, I beſeech Thee, whatever Fault I have had in them, and now give me Grace to be more wiſe. Teach me to diſtruſt myſelf, and much more my own Fears. Help me in moderating my Fears, and to regain a Quiet within my Breaſt. Compoſe my Thoughts, and bring under Government all my reſtleſs Imaginations. Teach me to fear, what deſerves to be feared; to diſtruſt, what ought to be diſtruſted, and there to reſt with Confidence, where Thou haſt directed me.

Thus, O God, I beg of Thee to ſettle my inward Man; that, having Peace within, I may

be able to ſerve Thee more faithfully, and find both Comfort and Advantage in the Exerciſes I perform. O merciful God, how happy ſhould I eſteem myſelf, could I obtain this Peace. Thou ſeeſt where my Fault is, and what my Weakneſs: Remedy both, I beſeech Thee; I lay them before Thee, and deſire thy Help; and I heartily implore thy Grace, that I may renounce all my own Ways, my Inclinations and immoderate Fears, and go on chearfully and with Confidence, in the Ways wherein Thou haſt ordered me to walk. For if I know thy Will and thy Ways, and yet dare not truſt myſelf in them, how can I ſay, my Hope is in Thee? O God of Mercy, increaſe and ſtrengthen my Hope, and give me ſuch true Humility, that I may freely ſurrender myſelf, and there reſt with Comfort, where Thou haſt appointed; and let no Imaginations frighten me out of this Method; for what is this, but to be frighted from Thee?

COVETOUSNESS.

O God, who haſt given this thy firſt and greateſt Command, to love Thee above all Things: Infuſe this Love, I beſeech Thee, into my Heart; may this alone there wholly rule, govern, and command; and grant I may find the Effects of it, in having no other Inclination or Affection within me, but what is wholly ſubject to it, and ſtrictly confined within thoſe Bounds which it preſcribes.

O God,

O God, who, being the Creator, art likewiſe ſovereign Lord of all; and therefore haſt the only Right of ordering and diſpoſing all Things; Give me Grace, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, that, as to whatever Thou haſt entruſted in my Hands, I may obſerve thy Orders, and only then think myſelf juſt and faithful, when I do what has been preſcribed by Thee.

And ſince, O God, Thou requireſt to be glorified in all thy Creatures; grant, I may ſeek to glorify Thee in as many as are under my Charge: That renouncing my own Inclination, and overcoming all immoderate Affection, I may enquire after thy Will, and diſpoſe of, and manage all Things in my Care, in ſuch a Manner as may contribute to thy Glory.

For this End, O God, while I return Thee moſt hearty Thanks, for whatever Bleſſings Thou haſt beſtowed upon me, I likewiſe moſt heartily beg thy Grace, that I may not ſet my Affections, in any immoderate Degree, upon thy Creatures, nor love thy Gifts, in ſuch an undue Manner, as to injure that Love which is due to Thee, the Giver.

This I aſk now, in a moſt particular Manner, in regard of Poſſeſſions and Money; becauſe Thou haſt taught me, that great is the Sin of Covetouſneſs, and many are the Sins into which it leads every Soul that is ſubject to it. Thou haſt declared to me, by thy Apoſtle, that Covetouſneſs is the Sin of Idolatry, which is worſhipping the Creature for God;

that it ought not ſo much as to be named; that they, who will grow rich, fall into Temptation, and the Snare of the Devil, and many hurtful Deſires, which drown Men in Perdition; that covetous Perſons are ſome of thoſe Sinners, who ſhall not poſſeſs the Kingdom of God. Thus am I taught by Thee, O God; and having learned from Thee, how deteſtable it is, and how much to be feared; help me, by thy Grace, and give me Strength to avoid it; ſo that, being ever watchful againſt the Guilt, I may be ſo happy as to eſcape the Puniſhment.

How unhappy ſhall I be, if I make the Encreaſe of thy Bleſſings, the Encreaſe of my Unhappineſs? And yet thus it muſt be, if having ſufficient Plenty, wherewith to relieve the Poor, and, by other Works of Charity, to purchaſe Heaven, I let the Love of Money tie up my Hands, and rather venture Eternity, than leſſen my Stock.

For what is this, but to give Money the Preference? It is a great Injuſtice, in ſetting Earth above Heaven, and valuing more the Convenience of a Moment, than the Goods of an eternal Duration. And can there be a Place in Heaven for a Heart ſo unjuſt? O God, I fear, this Judgment is already paſſed; and that the Soul will never come to the Poſſeſſion of Thee, who, having the Inheritance offered upon ſuch eaſy Terms, will not yet accept them.

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, deliver me from this Injuſtice; and may there never

never be found in me ſuch an unqueſtionable Evidence, that I do not love Thee. Give me rather a Heart to make earthly Goods ſerviceable to Eternity, and to contrive all Ways to ſpare for ſo great a Good. Thou haſt ſufficiently declared, how acceptable Almſgiving is to Thee, and how prevailing all Charity is for the obtaining thy Mercy. And what then can I expect leſs, than to have the Gates of Mercy ſhut againſt me, if, having enough to ſpare, my Heart is ſo linked to my Money, that it will part with none, upon theſe Terms, of engaging thy Mercy to me? Ah, unhappy Poſſeſſions! Unhappy Riches, if my Heart be ſo poſſeſſed with theſe, as even then not to open my Hands, when the giving but an inconſiderable Part, may be the Purchaſe of Heaven!

But more unhappy ſtill, if the Eagerneſs of Gain puts me upon unwarrantable Ways: If it prevails upon me to do any Injuſtice, to deny a Right, to wrong a Neighbour, to defraud or over-reach any in Contracts or Buſineſs, to oppreſs or be ſevere with the Perſecuted, the Oppreſſed, the Hireling, or the Poor; to cheat, where Ignorance or Overſight gives me Opportunity of doing it; to take Bribes, to the Prejudice of Truth or Right: If the Eagerneſs of Gain puts me upon any of theſe, or other ſuch unjuſt Ways, I muſt confeſs my Unhappineſs then to be in an Extreme; ſince Covetouſneſs cannot well go farther, than to trample upon the known Commands of God, for the Love of Money.

Wherefore, I again here moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, O God, to deliver me from this Vice. Permit me not, O moſt merciful Lord, to be blinded with this Paſſion. I ſee the Unreaſonableneſs, I ſee the Injuſtice, I ſee the Idolatry of it; and yet ſo deceitful I know it to be, that it hides all this Wickedneſs ſo far from thoſe, who lie under the Guilt, that they have Pretexts and Colours to make all look like innocent.

Shew Mercy therefore, O God, to thy Servant, and preſerve me from this deceitful Evil. Preſerve me from all Degrees of Covetouſneſs, and ſuffer not my Heart to be a Slave to Duſt. Make me induſtrious in providing for the Neceſſities of this Life; but, having done this, let me intirely depend upon thy fatherly Providence, and never attempt any Thing unjuſt or fraudulent, for ſecuring me againſt the Apprehenſions of Want.

And may this Confidence in Thee, my God, be ſo far ſtrengthened, that I may never be afraid of ſparing for the Relief of the Poor: Let no imaginary Fears of this Kind keep my Purſe ſhut to the Demands of Charity; and, whenever they occur, let the Fear of loſing Heaven expel the others from my Breaſt. Let this Anſwer to them be always ready upon my Lips: *He deſerves not Happineſs, who will not hazard ſomething for it.*

But where is the Hazard, when Thou haſt made ſuch Promiſes to ſuch as practiſe this Charity! Does not all depend upon thy Bleſſing? And is not there more Reaſon to hope for this, where

where ſuch Works of Charity are performed, as moſt certainly engage thy Goodneſs to their Protection? To be charitable, then, is the Way to thrive, rather than to want; and he, that lets his Fear of wanting take Place, ſhews too plainly, that his Faith is not ſound.

I beg therefore, O God, that I may give no Admittance to theſe deceitful Fears. Since, if I do, the Caſe is too evident, I deceive myſelf; and that in this one Thing is the Demonſtration of a covetous Heart, a Heart that loves Money more than God; of a Heart, whoſe Happineſs is ſo fixed in what it poſſeſſes, that it cannot be perſuaded to leſſen this, in Hopes of any Happineſs to come.

And what State now of Soul can be worſe than this; wherein one Paſſion is the Complication of ſo many Evils? A Want of Faith, a Want of Hope and Confidence in God, a greater Solicitude and Love of Money, than of God; a readier Service and Obedience paid to it, and this too commonly in Oppoſition to God's Commands; a Neglect of the moſt acceptable Offering which God requires: And this for the Sake of Duſt and Earth, which in ſuch Perſons has no Service beyond this Life, and at the Hour of Death muſt be all left behind. And what then will it profit, if a Man had the Riches of the whole World at Command; when Death is to ſeparate him from them, and he is to loſe his Soul eternally, for loving that, which now he has not, and never more will enjoy?

Deliver

Deliver me, therefore, O God, from this Evil, which thus blinds and damns: And ſince my bleſſed Redeemer has taught me, that the Perfection of the Goſpel conſiſts in *forſaking all*; mercifully grant, I may be at all Times very fearful of thoſe Inclinations, which put me upon keeping or gaining all. His Promiſe is made to the Poor in Spirit; and thus, O God, may I ever ſeek his Bleſſing.

Drunkenneſs.

I Come here before Thee, O God, tho' altogether unworthy to appear in thy Preſence; but ſince my Unhappineſs brings me a Petitioner to Thee, to confeſs my Sins, and to beg thy Compaſſion and Help, I confide in thy infinite Mercy, that, having at all Times given Encouragement to returning Sinners, I likewiſe ſhall find Favour in thy Sight.

Behold then, in the firſt Place, O God, I confeſs the Grievouſneſs of my Sin; it is a Sin which makes me neglect the Duties of my State; and much more the Duties of my Soul; cauſing a Coldneſs, as to all the Exerciſes of Religion, and an Indifferency as to whatever belongs to Thee, my God, and to the Means of working out my Salvation. It often deſtroys my Reaſon, that noble Faculty of my Soul, by which alone I am capable of knowing and ſeeking Thee, my only Good. It weakens all the other Faculties of my Mind, and injures my Health, ſo that in this one Sin I ſeem to deſpiſe all thy Bleſſings, and make them uſeleſs,

leſs, as to all thoſe Purpoſes for which Thou haſt given them to me.

It engages me in idle Company, and here, O God, who can number the Sins into which I am drawn by ill Example, and the Weakneſs of my own yielding Temper? How many Paſſions are here raiſed, to the Prejudice of all that is good, both in myſelf and my Neighbour? Here I waſte my Time; and my Hours, if not my Life, are here conſumed, to the great Neglect of temporal and eternal Concerns. Here I ſpend many of thoſe Talents, which Thou haſt bountifully depoſited in my Hands; and tho' there are many Uſes, in which, by thy own Appointment, I might employ them to the Good of Soul and Body, and of my Family; yet of how many Talents, O God, is this the only Account I can give, that *I have waſted them in idle Company and Drink.*

Beſides theſe, who can pretend to reckon up infinite other Sins, all known to Thee, O God, occaſioned by this; in the ill Example I give; in drawing others into Exceſs; in encouraging, or joining with thoſe who prophane all that is ſacred, ridicule Morality and Religion, and bring the Goſpel into Contempt; who make Conſcience a Phantom, and, ſetting it looſe from all Reſtraint, promote and glory in whatever is lewd and vicious; who conſume their Eſtate, and make it their Paſtime to bring their Generation into Miſery. If I join only with theſe, as a Companion, I cannot be exempt from a great Share in their Guilt: But

if

if I am equal with them in all their prophane and prodigal Extravagancies, O God, who then ſhall be able to ſum up the Number and Horror of my Sins!

Here I lay before Thee the preſent State of my Conſcience, as to this Particular. It is diſmal enough in this imperfect Account which I give of it; and much worſe muſt it appear to Thee, O God, to whom all the particular Circumſtances and Aggravations of my Crimes are known; ſuch as, I hope, will move Thee to have Compaſſion on me, ſince my Iniquity is become a Horror to me, and the earneſt Deſire of Amendment brings me here, this Day, a Petitioner to Thee. Look down, therefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, upon my diſtreſſed Soul, and mercifully grant the Requeſts I make to Thee.

O God, who ſeeſt me unhappily ſubject to every great Weakneſs, through a vicious Cuſtom, which has ſtrengthened in me Inclinations to what is offenſive to Thee, and pernicious to my own Soul; mercifully grant me thy aſſiſting Grace, that I may no longer be a Slave to Cuſtom, or Inclination; but that now, undertaking to ſtand againſt them both, I may purſue my Deſign with ſuch a ſteady Reſolution, as to regain the Liberty I have loſt, and ſubject all my unreaſonable Deſires to the Preſcript of thy Law.

Hear this my Prayer, O God, for I am very ſenſible of the Difficulty of what I at preſent propoſe; and although my Deſire be never ſo ſincere, that I cannot accompliſh

it,

it, but in Virtue of thy particular Aſſiſtance: For how ſhall I thus ſteadily deny myſelf, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not help me, and confirm me againſt the Violence of my own Inclination? Help me then, moſt gracious Lord, Thou, who knoweſt my Weakneſs and my Neceſſities, ſhew both thy Power and Goodneſs in my Relief; ſince by theſe alone can be prevented my being eternally miſerable.

Help me likewiſe, O merciful God, in breaking off from Company, in ſtanding out againſt all Solicitations, and deſpiſing the Reproaches of Acquaintance. For whatever I purpoſe of Amendment, I know, can be to no Purpoſe, if I have not Reſolution in theſe Particulars. In theſe therefore, O God, I beg thy Aſſiſtance; I beg Reſolution, I beg Courage, I beg Patience, I beg Diſcretion; for all theſe are neceſſary for the Help of my Infirmity; for the bearing all my inward Uneaſineſs, in the Change of the whole Method of my Life; for contriving proper Means; for avoiding Occaſions, and reſiſting Temptations. As this muſt be done, if I am in earneſt in what I have now propoſed.

Grant therefore, O God, I may be truly in earneſt; that I may not only think of reforming, but likewiſe conſider and reſolve upon the Means, that are neceſſary for executing what I propoſe. Ill Cuſtoms, I know, are not to be overcome, but with great Difficulties; and they, who cannot bear the Uneaſineſs of their Cure, muſt ſtill lie under their Diſtemper. But, O God, let not this be my Caſe.

I own

I own the Difficulty of my Cure; but behold, I offer myſelf to all, whatever is neceſſary for it.

If there be Difficulties, they are only ſuch as I have made neceſſary by my vicious Life. They are all juſtly due to my Sins; and there is nothing ſo troubleſome, but what I am bound to ſuffer. My great Sin has been in yielding to Inclination, and following my own Ways: And what can be more juſt, than to ſuffer now the Contradiction of my Inclination and Will, that there may be my Puniſhment, where my Sin has been?

But why do I ſpeak of ſuch Puniſhments, when I reflect upon my manifold and provoking Sins; when I conſider my Crime to be Drunkenneſs, which, by thy Apoſtle, Thou haſt declared to be one of the Sins which exclude from Heaven, and that *Drunkards ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?* What Puniſhment can I think too great, if it may be a Means of delivering me from this unhappy State? O God, nothing can be too much for me to ſuffer; my Sin and my Unhappineſs are ſuch, that, were I to ſuffer the greateſt Torments of this Life, the Condition would not be too hard. How then can I make Exception, when I have my Remedy propoſed to me, upon the eaſy Terms of denying my Inclination, and reſiſting the Occaſions of my Sin?

If Drunkards ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God, (and Thou, O Lord, haſt ſaid it) as long as I go on ſtill ſubject to this Vice,

I am

I am ſo long in the State of Damnation. And is not this the Miſery to be dreaded above all others; to be miſerable for ever and ever; and after Ten Thouſand Millions, and Ten Hundred Thouſand Millions of Years, to have ſtill Eternity to come, without any Comfort or Hopes of Relief? And, to have the Offer made me of eſcaping all this, upon my breaking this ill Cuſtom, and returning to a new Life! O God, how am I bound to acknowledge thy Goodneſs, who art thus merciful to Sinners: And how muſt I confeſs myſelf either an Atheiſt or Infidel, or deſperately mad, if I do not accept of the Mercy, and readily chuſe all the Uneaſineſs and Contradictions of a ſhort Cure, rather than to live on, doomed to an eternal Death, and only waiting for the Day of executing the Sentence, which then ſhall never be reverſed.

O bleſſed God, I accept the Mercy offered to one, whoſe Sins have rendered him unworthy of all Mercy; but ſuch is thy Goodneſs, and I accept it. I am content with all the Difficulties I am to meet, and readily embrace whatever Self-denials or Retirement are neceſſary for this great Change of Life. But then, as I ſincerely deſire Thee to direct, ſo I moſt earneſtly beg Thee to confirm my Reſolutions, and to give me that true Spirit of an humble Penitent, as to embrace, with Chearfulneſs and Courage, whatever Difficulties ſhall be neceſſary for the Cure of my Infirmity. And let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, O God, to begin now at this Time, without admitting

mitting any Pretext for Delays: And may this Grace, O merciful Lord, be followed with the Gift of Perſeverance, ſo as to go on untired and reſolute, notwithſtanding all the Struggles of a biaſs'd Nature, all the Diſcouragements of whatever Inconveniences may appear from purſuing ſuch a Reſolution: May I ſtill hold on, O God, and rather venture all, than flatter my Inclination by yielding to it: All, O God, rather than to live on in this deteſtable Vice.

Neither let it be my Victory only to overcome Drunkenneſs, or the Sin of loſing my Reaſon, and become Brute: Not this only, O God; but to break off from all Exceſs of Drinking, ſo as never to exceed in the *Quantity* of what I drink, nor in the *Time* or *Money* ſpent at ſuch Entertainments. I know, O bleſſed Lord, I was created for a more noble End, than thus to ſpend my Time: I know, likewiſe, where Reaſon is not injured by Exceſs, there may be ſtill contracted a manifold Guilt, in drawing others to ſuch Exceſs; in idle Converſation; in ſinful Subjects of Diſcourſe; in contracting a Habit of Idleneſs, and a Diſlike of all that is ſerious and pious; in the Neglect of Buſineſs, Diſorder of Family, ill Example, Contempt of Diſcipline, Prejudice of Eſtate, Loſs of Time, Grief of Friends, opening the Heart to many Paſſions, to a Love of unprofitable, dangerous, and ſinful Liberties; taking it off from the Senſe of what is eternal, and giving it a Diſreliſh of whatever can be profitable to Salvation. Theſe,

Theſe, and infinite other Sins, I confeſs, O God, are contracted at ſuch Meetings, even where the Exceſs reaches not the Brain. Wherefore, I here, with all the Powers of my Soul, importune thy Power and Goodneſs to my Aſſiſtance, beſeeching Thee to help me in breaking from all ſuch Company, and bidding adieu to all ſuch Entertainments. Imprint in my Soul a true Horror of them, as they deſerve; may I ever apprehend them under a the Deformity which juſtly belongs to them; as the Corruption of Youth; the School of Prophaneneſs, Irreligion, and Atheiſm; the Encouragement of Vice; the Deſtruction of good Order and chriſtian Diſcipline; the Conſumption of Eſtates, Life, and Religion; and as that which opens the Way to all that is unbecoming, and even contrary to the Goſpel.

With this Idea let my Soul be poſſeſſed ſo far as even to have a Dread of all ſuch Meetings: And who ought not to dread them, if they conſider how they confederate with Hell, to the Overthrow of Religion and Ruin of Souls? With this ſame may I be ever armed againſt all Temptations; and, let thy Mercy, O God, ſo confirm this in me, that no Pretexts of Reformation, no Example, or Character of others, may prevail with me to be an Encourager of ſuch idle Aſſemblies.

Rather, O merciful God, let thy Grace direct me to contrive ſome better Employment of my Time; for I confeſs, O God, I think they are much better employed who work at the Plough, the Spade, or the Anvil, than they

they who make little or no Uſe of the Plenty Thou haſt given them, than to drink, ſmoke, game, and ſleep away their Lives; the former are eſteemed more unhappy, but theſe are certainly ſo: And therefore, with all my Soul, I beg of thy infinite Goodneſs to deliver, or preſerve me from the Unhappineſs of ſuch an idle, diſedifying, and ſinful Life.

This I aſk of Thee, O God, who knoweſt all my Weakneſs; but Thou ſeeſt the Sincerity of my Heart, and, according to this, I beſeech Thee to grant my Petition. Regard not, therefore, O Lord, my Inclinations, nor the Corruption of my Nature; for theſe I ſee to be contrary to thy Law, and my own eternal Good; and it is the Fear I have of theſe brings me now a Petitioner before thy Throne, to implore thy Help againſt them.

Aſſiſt me therefore, O God, and grant me now the Strength I aſk. Give me Strength to ſtand againſt my own evil Inclinations, againſt Company and all other Temptations; give me Courage and Patience to bear all the Uneaſineſs of my Cure. And, as for the Reproaches and evil Conſtructions of Men, may I reſolutely deſpiſe all theſe, and not value what Men can ſay, ſo I can but come to ſuch a Change, as to overcome all my evil Habits of Idleneſs and Exceſs, and experience the Comforts of a truly chriſtian Life. Grant but this, O God, and I am content with all the Difficulties that are in the Way to this Happineſs, and that the World expreſs in Diſlike of me, as it ſhall think fit.

For

For what is all this, if I am in thy Favour, and in the Way to eternal Comforts!

A Clean Heart.

KNowing how great is the Promiſe Thou haſt made to the *Clean of Heart*, that *they ſhall ſee thy Face*; I here come before Thee this Day, O God, to beg, that there may be found nothing in me, to exclude me from this Promiſe. The Knowledge of my own Corruption makes me fear myſelf, and even apprehend my future State; aſſiſt me therefore, I beſeech Thee, with a particular Grace, at this Time, that I may pour forth my Soul before Thee, with ſuch true Fervour of Spirit, that my Prayer may aſcend before, and obtain the Grace of what I want.

In the firſt Place, I recommend to Thee, O God of Holineſs, my Heart and my Thoughts, beſeeching Thee to take them into thy Protection, and to fence them againſt all Evil. Be thou, O Lord, a Guard unto them, that my Heart being created and choſen by Thee, to be the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, nothing may have Admittance there, that can poſſibly defile it; but that it may be ever holy, becauſe Thou art holy.

For this End, I moſt earneſtly beg thy Grace may have this good Effect in me, to make me ever watchful againſt all evil Thoughts, ſo that upon their very firſt Approach I may always ſtart at them, as upon the Surprize of an Enemy, and induſtriouſly labour to

to remove them. This I aſk, becauſe my Thoughts, though concealed to others, are all open and known to Thee, who art the Searcher of Hearts; and, if I wilfully entertain any that are ſinful, however innocent I appear, yet my Guilt is preſently before Thee, and to Thee muſt I give my Account of the Sin, whatever it be, to which I have thus opened my Heart.

Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O God, to give me a Horror of all ſuch Thoughts, and ſuch a faithful Watchfulneſs againſt them, that without any Delay of Treaty or Conference, or even ſo much as looking at them, I may uſe my beſt Endeavour, for diſengaging myſelf from them. This, O God, I confeſs muſt be thy Gift, and I aſk it of Thee, that, having renounced the Devil, I may never entertain him under that Diſguiſe.

Preſerve me likewiſe, O God, from taking Delight, and pleaſing myſelf in any of theſe ſinful Imaginations which preſent themſelves to my Mind; ſince it muſt neceſſarily defile my Soul, if I wilfully ſeek Satisfaction, and pleaſe myſelf in what is ſo diſpleaſing to Thee. Arm me therefore, I beſeech Thee, with a Zeal againſt all thy Enemies, and give me Grace to reſiſt them; that whenever they aſſault me, and unthinkingly ſurprize me with Delight, I may, in that very Moment, give them a Repulſe, and, with an Abhorrence, renounce whatever undue Impreſſions they have made upon my Soul.

Help

Help me, I beſeech Thee, O merciful God, in this Point; for, if thy Grace prevents it not, my corrupt Nature will betray me to my Enemies, and I ſhall be inſenſibly drawn in to join with them in all their Deſigns. But ſuffer me not, O Father of Mercies, to be thus treacherous to myſelf, in a Caſe, where no leſs than Eternity is concerned. Stand by me, O God, in all ſuch Dangers, and come in to my Aſſiſtance. Thou knoweſt my Weakneſs, my Blindneſs, and the Falſeneſs of my Nature; Thou ſeeſt all my Dangers; and, if thy Goodneſs does not move Thee to have Compaſſion, what can I do but periſh? Forſake me not, therefore, in ſuch my Diſtreſs, but help me, according to my Neceſſities; and then, by thy Power and Mercy, ſhew me that Thou art my God.

Enter then, O Lord, into my Soul, and keep Poſſeſſion of that, which, upon ſo many Titles, belongs to Thee. Permit it not to be ſeized and held by the Enemy, but command him thence by the Word of Power, and obtain for me the Liberty of enjoying Thee in Peace. Turn then all my Thoughts with Violence towards Thee; turn them from all other Objects; and let this, O God, be my conſtant Practice, as often as any Evil aſſaults me, immediately to raiſe my Heart to Thee, and ſeek Refuge where is my only Defence, that ſo I may diſappoint my Enemy, and make all his Snares ſerviceable, for obtaining greater Security and Strength to my Soul. May this, O God, be always my Practice, and

and let me never be diſappointed in my Hope.

But, ſince the working of my Thoughts is ſo very uncertain, that I ſcarce know how to make a true Judgment of them, and, I fear, am often deceived: I therefore beg of Thee, if it be thy bleſſed Will, to deliver me from this troubleſome and dangerous Exerciſe. It is an afflicting Thing for Souls, ſtamped with thy Image, O God, and created for the Poſſeſſion of Thee, to be drawn into thoſe muddy Delights, and, when they are ſeeking Thee, even then to find themſelves overwhelmed with Filth. Ah, my God! I know this to be the Effect and Puniſhment of Sin, and therefore Juſtice obliges me to ſubmit to the Trouble of it. But ſtill, O Father of Mercies, here Thou mayeſt have Compaſſion on me, and either releaſe, or change ſomething of this Penalty.

Shew Mercy therefore, I beſeech Thee, to thy Servant, and reſcue me from this Perſecution. I refuſe not to ſuffer, neither do I deſire an Exemption from thy Scourge; for, I know I deſerve the worſt. But, O God, I moſt humbly petition for Favour in this Particular, where the Puniſhment puts me in Danger of encreaſing my Sin: I beg Thee here to ſhew thyſelf an indulgent Father to me, and ſuffer me no more to feel the Effects of this Corruption, which is ſo deteſtable in thy Sight.

Frequent Storms have often riſen againſt me, and brought my Soul into great Confuſion; and, how far I have yielded under them, is only known to Thee; but, now proſtrate before thy

thy infinite Goodneſs, I humbly beg Pardon for whatever Guilt I have at any Time contracted, either by opening my Heart to any ſinful Delight, or giving Entertainment to unlawful Thoughts, or not making that ſpeedy Reſiſtance againſt Temptations as I ought. Whatever my Sins have been in this Kind, through the whole Courſe of my Life, I now lay them before Thee, and beſeech Thee to conceal them, through the Blood of thy only Son, that ſo, being purified from this Guilt, my Heart may be preſented a clean Sacrifice in thy Sight.

And now, for the Time to come, let thy Mercy be ſo favourable to me, as to grant me a Calm; let nothing, that can defile, break in and diſturb the Quiet of my Soul: May thy Goodneſs privilege me againſt ſuch Aſſaults, and reſtrain the Malice of my Enemy within ſuch Bounds, that he may have no Liberty for making theſe Attacks upon me. This I ſincerely deſire, that I may no more relapſe into the ſame Sins; and I hope the Sincerity of my Prayers, for obtaining a clean Heart, will prevail for the Grant of what I aſk.

At leaſt, ſo far as I importune thy Mercy to grant my Requeſt, that I never draw Temptations upon myſelf, by my own Fault, either thro' Indiſcretion, or yielding to any Inclination that is ſenſual. Upon this Account, I aſk of Thee, O God, ſuch inward Strength of Mind, that I may keep all my Senſes under due Government, and never allow them ſuch Liberties as may be the Occaſion of Sin.

O my God, how often have I drank in Poiſon, and let in Death by theſe Windows, pleaſing myſelf with ſuch Entertainments as could not be ſeparated from Sin! Great and many have been my Sins in this Kind, whilſt my Eyes and Ears have been there open, where, had Salvation been my Care, I ought to have turned them away, and ſhut them with Horror.

But great is thy Mercy, O God, and to this I appeal, for the Pardon of theſe numberleſs Follies and Sins. Forgive me, I beſeech Thee, O Father of Mercy; have regard to the Sighs of an humble and contrite Heart, and, thro' the infinite Mercies of my bleſſed Redeemer, cleanſe my Soul from the Guilt of my Iniquities.

But in vain do I make this Petition, if I take no Care to reform my paſt Diſorders, and do not labour to keep my Senſes under a Chriſtian Reſtraint. Wherefore I here ſolicit Thee, O God, for thy heavenly Aſſiſtance, that neither my Eyes nor my Ears may be any more in the Service of Senſuality; but that, whenever this begins to appear, I may forthwith take the Alarm, as againſt an Enemy, and forbid all the Faculties of my Soul and Body to contribute, in any Kind, to its Aſſiſtance.

In this, O God, give me Strength, I beſeech Thee, and whatever my Inclination demands, yet mercifully grant, I may with Reſolution ſtand againſt it, and, in thoſe very dangerous Circumſtances, remember, I was not created to ſerve Inclination, but to worſhip,

worſhip, obey, and ſerve Thee, my God. Grant then, I may reſiſt Inclinations and Nature, which are corrupt, and lead to Sin; that I may keep all my Senſes under ſuch Command, as to reſtrain them from Evil: That uſing them in the Service of Life, as Thou haſt ordained, I may not abuſe them to thy Diſpleaſure, whoſe Gift they are, and on whoſe continual Mercy every Motion and Action of them depends. Turn away my Eyes, O God, that they ſee not Vanity; ſtop my Ears againſt it: How many are miſerable thro' the Want of theſe Senſes! It is thy Mercy I enjoy them; grant I may never turn it to Sin.

This Petition I renew, O God, in a particular Manner, as to the due Government of my Tongue: Imploring thy Grace, that I may never open my Lips in Favour of any Thing that is ſenſual, either directly or indirectly, neither in earneſt nor in jeſt. For I know, this Sort of Communication is unbecoming a Chriſtian; it is forbidden by thy Apoſtle, and ſtrict Charge is given by him to the Followers of Jeſus Chriſt, That *no corrupt Communication proceed out of their Mouths*; That *Filthineſs*, or *Fooliſh Talking*, or *Jeſting*, *be not once named amongſt them.* Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, hear thy Servant, O God, and ſo mercifully Aſſiſt me with thy Grace, that I may ſtrictly obſerve this Rule, and never more ſpeak one Word, in Compliance with any ſinful Inclination of my own, or by the Encouragement of others.

This I aſk with greater Earneſtneſs, becauſe I am ſenſible this is not only my Sin, as in many other Things, but, by ſuch Diſcourſe, I become the Miniſter of the Devil, and, as his Agent, help to draw Souls into his Snares; even thoſe Souls which were purchaſed by the Blood of Chriſt, thoſe do I endeavour to bring back into Slavery again; and, how great may be the Injury I do them, is only known to Thee, O God. But let this be ſo no more, I beſeech Thee. Let the Horror of the Sin, the Fear of thy great Diſpleaſure, the Injury of my Neighbour, be a Bar upon my Lips, and for ever keep them ſhut againſt all ſuch Filth; and, while I profeſs myſelf a Follower of Jeſus Chriſt, let me no more be thus a Traitor to him; not ſo much as in a jeſting Way, ſince, however I may mean no Harm, the Devil is certainly in Earneſt, and, in this Matter, is no more capable of Jeſt, than it can be to give Poiſon without intending to do Miſchief by it. Rather, I know, where this Subject is dreſſed up with Wit, it is ſtill the more mortal, and, like a pointed Dart, makes the deepeſt Wound. Grant therefore, O God, this my Petition, that I may never join in ſuch Diſcourſe, never ſpeak one Word that can bear this Conſtruction; but that I may reſiſt all Corruption, and be as cautious in what I ſpeak, as one who believes he is to give an Account of every idle Word.

For the more exact Obſervance of this, I beg likewiſe, I may be ever careful in the Choice of my Company, ſo as to avoid all thoſe

thoſe whom I know inclined to take ſuch Liberties as are not becoming a Chriſtian Converſation. This, I confeſs, is a great Point, and ſo many Sins take their Riſe from theſe Indiſcretions, that I cannot pretend to be innocent if I wilfully put myſelf into ſuch Company, or do not, with Reſolution, break from it. Be my Helper therefore here, I beſeech Thee, O God; and, ſince Thou haſt given me a Deſire not to offend Thee, grant likewiſe, ſuch Strength of Grace, as to ſtand againſt all thoſe Inclinations and Affections which would lead me into the Occaſions of offending Thee. Vain, I confeſs, are all my Deſires of doing well, if I follow the Inclinations which lead me to Evil. Vain is the Innocence of my Propoſals, in intending no Harm, if I wilfully put myſelf into the Dangers of Sin. Let thy Grace therefore make me wiſer, and eſtabliſh my Heart againſt all ſuch Snares; and ſince I deſire and profeſs to love Thee, take from my Heart, I beſeech Thee, the Love of whatever is contrary to Thee: Since I profeſs Sin to be my greateſt Misfortune, grant I may never wilfully run into it; and ſuffer me not, O merciful God, to be ſo mad as to chooſe ſuch Paſtime, and make that my preſent Satisfaction which cannot be ſeparated from Sin: For, what is this but pleaſing myſelf, in drawing the greateſt of Miſchiefs upon my own Head, and making myſelf eternally miſerable?

Having made this Petition, I now aſk, likewiſe, to be preſerved from all ſinful Actions, and the greater Crimes of this Kind. This I have ſtill more Reaſon to aſk, becauſe they are the greater Provocation to Thee, and there can be no Hopes of thy Mercy, as long as a Perſon lives under this Guilt. Thy Apoſtle has ſufficiently informed me of this, in declaring theſe to be the *Sins of the Heathens*, who have been given up by God to a reprobate Senſe, and *not God?* That the *Luſts of the Fleſh war againſt the Soul*; that they *are the Works of Darkneſs*; that *to be carnally minded is Death, and Enmity with God*; that they, *who fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; that the *unclean Perſon has not any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt.*

This is ſeveral Times repeated by thy Apoſtle, and while he delivers thy Word to me, it is Thou, O Lord, haſt pronounced this Sentence; and, if I live in theſe Sins, I ſee I am by Thee already condemned. Help me therefore, here, O God, and deliver me from this Guilt: Help me in overcoming whatever Part of this Evil I am ſubject to: I am weak, and I confeſs it to Thee, but, through thy Grace, I ſhall be able to do all Things. Leave me not, therefore, I beſeech Thee, to my Weakneſs, but hear and help thy poor Servant; for, behold, I put my Truſt in Thee.

The Difficulty is great in gaining this Victory over myſelf; but, what wilt thou do, my Soul?

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Is it not much harder to dwell with eternal Flames?

Thou heareſt what God has ſaid; That they, who do theſe Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Thou muſt, therefore, either overcome thyſelf, or look for the Execution of this Sentence already pronounced.

Ah, my God, thus I know the Caſe ſtands with me; I am, at preſent, unhappy in my Sin, and, without Amendment, muſt wait for greater Unhappineſs.

Thou haſt ſaid it, whoſe Word cannot fail; if I reform not my Life, I muſt be eternally miſerable.

Behold then, O God, I turn to Thee, my only Helper, and aſk for Mercy.

I confeſs all my paſt Iniquities before Thee; my Soul is in Confuſion at the Horror of my Crimes.

My Sins have been multiplied above the Hairs of my Head; and now, like a heavy Weight, they are a Burthen, under which my Soul muſt ſink, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not relieve me.

Have Compaſſion therefore on me, I beſeech Thee; ſtretch forth thy Hand to me, in my Diſtreſs, and help me.

For tho' I have been ſo unworthy, ungrateful, and blind, as to rebel againſt Thee, and to live on unconcerned in thy Diſpleaſure.

Yet now my Sins are a Rack to my Soul; I look upon myſelf as the moſt miſerable of all Creatures, for the many and grevious Sins I

have committed; and, Oh, that now with a Flood of Tears, Tears of Repentance, Tears of Sorrow and Contrition, I could cleanſe my Soul from all the Pollution of them.

This, O God, I deſire from my Heart; have Regard to my Deſires, and grant my Requeſt.

Grant me now a ſincere Repentance, and may the Fruit of it appear in the Amendment of my Life.

May it appear in my moſt ſerious Endeavours for Amendment.

Let thy heavenly Light and Grace direct me, in conſidering the Means neceſſary for overcoming my Sin.

May the ſame Grace give me Reſolution and Strength to make uſe of all ſuch Means, however difficult they may be.

Let it not now be thinking only, but doing: And, in the firſt Place, may I now effectually break from all the *Occaſions* of my Sin.

And if ſuch *Occaſions* ſeem as dear or neceſſary to me, as my Hand, or my Eye, let this be no Exception; may I chooſe to be maim or lame; all Inconveniencies, O Lord, rather than live on in ſuch a State, as to expect nothing but to be caſt into Hell.

If Nature will not be governed, may I undertake ſuch Ways as will oblige it to yield; for it is far better for me, O Lord, to bear the Difficulties of bringing it into Subjection, than by its Diſorder to become a Reprobate.

I cannot pretend either to deſire Salvation, or to love Thee, my God, if, ſeeing myſelf carried out of the Way, I will undertake

and

and ſuffer nothing for putting a Stop to this Violence.

If Nature will not bear it willingly, it muſt be brought to it unwillingly, and forced to bend: All Difficulties are to be ſuffered here, rather than loſe Thee, my God.

How many Things have I ſuffered thro' my Sin, thro' my Paſſion, Pride, or Humour? And, ſhall not I ſuffer more for my Salvation?

All for Thee, my God; I now offer myſelf to ſuffer all whatever ſhall be neceſſary for my Cure.

If Faſting, if Sack-cloth and Aſhes, if lying on the Ground, if renouncing Eaſe, and all that pleaſes, be neceſſary for humbling the Fleſh, I accept it all; thinking it much better the Fleſh ſhould ſuffer now, than eternally; much better the Fleſh be puniſhed now, than my Soul periſh for ever.

If Recollection be neceſſary for conſidering the true State of my Soul; if a Retreat be neceſſary for ſeparating myſelf from all the Provocations to Sin; behold, I chooſe this as infinitely better than to be ſeparated from Thee for ever.

I approve, I ſubmit to, I chooſe all Difficulties that can contribute to the healing my diſtempered Soul: And now, thro' thy Grace, I begin without farther Delay.

Grant me the Grace, O God, and Conſtancy of Mind that is neceſſary for me. I remember the Devil left not the young Man in the Goſpel, tho' at the Command of Chriſt, but with great ſtruggling, ſo as almoſt to deprive him of Life.

If the evil Spirit be thus obſtinate in me, and unwilling to quit his Hold, I cannot wonder; it is my own Fault, who have thus given him the Encouragement; and I muſt be contented with the Trouble I have thus created to myſelf.

But help me then, O God, according to my Neceſſities; help me in recovering my Liberty.

And now, O merciful Lord, whenever the evil Spirit, by his Suggeſtions, ſhall make his Attempts upon me; ſtand by me, and give me Reſolution to do what ſhall be moſt effectual for my Safety.

Give me Reſolution to reſiſt them, to break away from my own Thoughts, from my Place, from my Bed, and, without any Conſideration, to throw myſelf proſtrate before Thee, and upon the Earth, in the moſt humble Manner, to importune Thee for Help againſt my Enemy,

Thus, O God, may I always do, upon the very firſt Approach of Evil, without allowing any Time of Amuſement, or Debates; and thus with Violence may I ſtand againſt Violence.

Almighty and everlaſting God, Father of Mercy, who calleſt Sinners to Repentance, and haſt promiſed they ſhall find Thee to be their God, who are truly converted to Thee. Grant, I beſeech Thee, that what I now propoſe may be the Effect of a ſincere Repentance; give me Strength to go thro' all the Difficulties of it, and deliver me from all Deluſion of my own Paſſion: By this Method may I wholly overcome my own ill Habits, be purified from whatever

whatever has hitherto defiled my Soul, and by thy Mercy obtain the comfortable Treaſure of a clean Heart, the Way to thy eternal Bleſſing. Grant this, O God, that Thou mayeſt be glorified in a poor Sinner returning from his evil Ways, and giving Praiſe to thy holy Name for ever.

For overcoming any ſinful Cuſtom or Vice.

BEhold here, O merciful Lord, an unhappy Sinner before Thee; one, who, inſtead of faithfully ſerving Thee, is a Slave to Sin. Upon this Account, I know myſelf to be miſerable, and under thy great Diſpleaſure. However, ſince now my Sin is become my Trouble, I ſincerely deſire to forſake it (and to Thee, O God, is my Sincerity known) I hope I ſhall find a favourable Acceptance of my Prayers, and, that calling all Sinners to Repentance, Thou wilt now recieve one, who obeys thy Call, and comes to Thee.

And, in the firſt Place, that I may not deceive myſelf, as I too often have done, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to touch my Heart, and, by thy effectual Grace, to give me a true, hearty, and ſincere Repentance of all my paſt Sins, and, in particular, of that, which at preſent is my greateſt Burthen. Grant, that what I now aſk may not proceed from any ſuperficial, paſſing, inconſtant, melancholy, or otherwiſe ill-grounded Concern, but from the real Deſire of my Heart; ſo that what I now do

do may be propoſed and undertaken by thy Direction, and finiſhed by thy helping Grace.

Beginning upon ſo good a Foundation, I, in the next Place, aſk of Thee to enlighten and direct me what I am to do, in order to the gaining this Victory upon myſelf. In this, O God, I ſtand in need of thy particular Aſſiſtance, becauſe, without this, I ſhall certainly fail in the Choice of proper Means, or deceive myſelf with ſome plauſible, but treacherous Pretext, ſuch as will make void whatever Good I at preſent propoſe.

Take me therefore, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, O God, under thy Protection, and direct my Steps into thy Paths. Deliver me from all Deluſions in this important Concern, and give me that practical Diſcretion as not to be impoſed on by the deceitful Arguments of the World, of my own falſe Nature, my Paſſion, or my Sloth. Theſe are all ſo agreeable to Inclination, that I have too great Reaſon to fear myſelf. And therefore, knowing I have nothing to truſt to, but thy Goodneſs and Mercy, to theſe I appeal, and with ſuch an entire Reſignation I put myſelf into thy Hands, that I hope, as Thou haſt promiſed, Thou wilt not forſake Thoſe who ſeek and put their Truſt in Thee.

Direct me then, O God, in thy Mercy, and grant I may now conſider what are the neceſſary Means for effecting what I propoſe; and this, O bleſſed Lord, with the Seriouſneſs of one who deſires to have his Work done. Let me not therefore now content myſelf

ſelf with barren Thoughts; but, as one who is to build a Tower, let me conſider what is neceſſary for finiſhing it: Without this, I know, all the reſt is but Mockery; and I can no more reform my Life, than I can build a Tower, by ſitting ſtill and thinking of it, except I procure Neceſſaries, and ſet forward the Work: And this it is I now aſk of Thee, O God: Help me, I beſeech Thee, in conſidering it.

Reflect then, my Soul; ſee what thy Diſtemper is: How long Time haſt thou been accuſtomed to it?

Doſt not thou unthinkingly fall into this Sin? Art not thou carried to it with Violence?

Are not thy Inclinations ſtrong? Haſt not thou been often ſenſible of thy Evil; often judged it neceſſary to be reformed; often propoſed and undertaken it?

And yet ſtill thy Sin continues. Doſt not thou ſee in this thy Work is difficult; and what thou haſt hitherto propoſed, or done, is not enough?

Is it not evident, if thou in earneſt deſireſt to have it finiſhed, ſomething more is to be done, and other Means are to be uſed for effecting it?

And if thou goeſt on, as hitherto, what can thy Expectation be, but vain?

What then is to be done? Are there any Occaſions to be avoided? Art thou too ſeparate from Provocations, Temptations, or Company?

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Are thy Inclinations, Appetite, or Fleſh, to be ſubdued? Are Cuſtoms to be broken? Are thy Senſes to be governed? Art thou to depart from thy common Way? Are thy Paſſions to be brought under Command, and thy Tongue to be reſtrained? Art thou to overcome Nature, and deny thyſelf in what is moſt pleaſing to thee, and do that to which thy Nature is averſe?

All this is done by great Numbers, who have brought Nature into Subjection. Nay, thou thyſelf canſt do it: When Pride, or Intereſt; when Flattery or Dependance, require it of thee, thou canſt do it all.

Let but ſome Humour or Contradiction undertake to command, and thou art, at the Inſtant, a perfect Maſter of thyſelf, and there is no Self-denial, but is made eaſy to thee.

Ah, my God, daily Experience obliges me to confeſs this: I find plainly, for human Reſpects I can govern all whatever I pretend to be ungovernable in me: This is Demonſtration the Thing is to be done. And why is it then I do it not for thy Sake, O God?

The only Reaſon is this; becauſe my Inclinations to Evil are ſtronger than the Love or Fear I pretend to have for Thee; and becauſe I am more concerned in what is preſent, than in what Faith teaches me of the Life to come. Thus the Strength of my Inclinations or Paſſions is the Cauſe of all my Misfortune; and it is to favour theſe, I loſe my God, and live out of the Way of Salvation.

Ah,

Ah, my Soul! And wilt thou chuſe thus to periſh eternally? What is all this World; what is Happineſs, its Satisfactions and Greatneſs, in Compariſon of Eternity? A ſhort Life finiſhes all theſe; the Stroke of Death cuts all theſe off, and Eternity then begins: And is Suffering ſo eaſy to Thee, that, upon ſuch inconſiderable Conditions, thou chuſeſt to enter into everlaſting Sufferings, ſuch as are without all Hopes of Relief or Comfort! All, that have been in thy unhappy Way, for ſo many Ages paſt, are all gone, as a Shadow; thou haſt now a ſhort Appearance to make, thou wilt ſoon follow them, and then all this World, with all thou enjoyeſt in it, will be as if it never had been, and nothing but everlaſting Miſery before thee, to reward thy Folly: And this, becauſe thou wilt not take the Pains to govern thy Inclinations.

O bleſſed God, I ſee the Folly of ſuch a Choice, and, thro' thy Grace, I reſolve to renounce it. I ſee my Life muſt be reformed, my Inclinations, Paſſions, ill Cuſtoms, muſt be brought all under the Government of thy Law, and whatever the Trouble or Contradiction be, in effecting it, I muſt undertake and go thro' it.

I know it is what may be done, and that great Numbers have done it. I know, by due Watchfulneſs, I may obſerve all my habitual and ſurprizing Sins, and be prepared to ſtand againſt them. I know the ſtrongeſt Inclinations and Paſſions may be overcome by Self-denials, Separations, Humiliation, &c. I know

know the Violence of long Cuſtoms may be broken by the ſame Method; I know the whole Man may be thus brought into Subjection. And whereas nothing of this can be duly effected, but by Thy Help; Thou thyſelf haſt taught me how this is to be obtained. Thou haſt taught me, both by thy Word, and infinite Inſtances of thy Mercy, that Prayer, and Faſting, and Alms, and Works of Charity, with the Sighs of a contrite Heart, are powerful Expedients for obtaining thy Aſſiſtance: And I queſtion not, if I make uſe of theſe Means, with a ſound Faith and firm Hope in thy Goodneſs, but I ſhall receive ſuch Succours of thy Grace, as to find the good Effect of my Endeavours.

Now I am very ſenſible this requires a Change in the whole Method of my Life, that I muſt renounce my uſual Sloth and Indulgence of myſelf, and that my Care now muſt be, not how to pleaſe, but how to deny myſelf. This muſt be; but what then? It is worth all my Labour and Trouble, ſince it is for the eſcaping of Hell, and ſecuring a happy Eternity. If I were now in Hell, as my Sins deſerve, how willingly ſhould I accept of this Trouble, and ten thouſand Times more, were my Releaſe to be granted from that Place of Torments on this Condition? And can I pretend to have common Reaſon, if believing myſelf to be now in the direct Way to Hell, nay, even poſting on to it, I will not take this Pains for delivering myſelf from this unhappy State? For what is this Trouble? It is no more than

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what, by my Sins, I have made neceſſary; and therefore, both for Juſtice, and for my own Intereſt, I am bound to undertake it. And, O God, how little, how very inconſiderable is it, in Compariſon of the endleſs Miſery I am to eſcape, and the eternal Crown I am to gain by it?

This being the Truth of my Caſe, I beſeech Thee, O merciful God, to give me Reſolution to undertake this Method, Courage to go on with it, and Perſeverance to ſee the happy Fruits of it. Let no Kind of Self-love prevail in me, but only that which is ſolicitous to ſecure my Eternity; and if that which is corrupt appears, demanding its uſual Homage, give me Grace to deſpiſe it; and, by a ſteady Reſiſtance, to let it know I have choſen another Maſter. If it murmurs, if it rebels, if it contrives all Ways, both by Snares and Force, ſtand Thou by me, O God, and, by thy Grace, help me to put it into Deſpair, by convincing it that I am ready to ſuffer all the Uneaſineſs, whatever it be, that is neceſſary for ſubduing it.

This, O eternal God, is my hearty Deſire; confirm it in me, I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, and improve it. Root out of my Heart the Love of all that is ſinful; inſpire me with a Contempt of all that is dangerous, vain, and worldly, and let not Paſſion, Humour, or any ill Cuſtoms govern in me, but thy holy Will alone. If there be Difficulties in this Method of a new Life, let it be my daily Satisfaction to find them, and my Glory to ſuf-

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fer the Uneaſineſs of them. For having taken ſo much Pains for Earth, and ſuffered ſo much Uneaſineſs in the Cauſe of Self-love and Sin; it is but reaſonable I ſhould ſuffer ſomething in a better Cauſe.

This I confeſs, this I deſire; reject not the Petition of a poor Sinner, but help me, O moſt gracious Lord, according as Thou know'ſt I ſtand in Need of thy Help. I know the Taſk to be great, which I now propoſe, and my Weakneſs is ſo well known, that it is enough to diſcourage me. But, O God, ſince my Confidence is not in myſelf, but in Thee, I have, in thy infinite Power and Goodneſs, enough to truſt to, and to carry me on with Comfort, amidſt all Diſcouragements. Here then is my Dependance, here my Hope: Truſting in theſe, I reſolve to make War againſt Sin, to break from myſelf, from all evil Cuſtoms and Company: Help me, O God of Mercy, in my Undertaking, and by thy continual Aſſiſtance carry me on, with ſuch Conſtancy, that neither my corrupt Nature, nor the Devil, nor World, may any more prevail againſt me: Grant this, O God, that my Soul may be ſaved, and thy holy Name for ever be glorified in the Works of thy Mercy.

Under ſome immoderate Affection or Paſſion.

I Come before Thee, O God, to complain of my Unhappineſs, and to implore thy Mercy for my Relief. Behold, O merciful Father,

Father, my Soul is in great Diſorder, and a violent Storm is riſen within me. My Heart is ſeized, and I ſeem to have loſt the Liberty both of Thought and Will; Peace is departed from my Breaſt, and ſtrange Imaginations rack my Spirits; ſo that I am not only robbed of my inward Comfort, but am likewiſe rendered incapable of ſeeking Thee in Prayer, or performing any one Duty which belongs to Eternity.

This, O God, is but a ſad Account of a Soul, which being created for Thee, and not for this World, ought to be ſolicitous in working out its Salvation; and unhappy I, inſtead of Heaven, have my Heart wholly taken up with Earth, am bent upon it, as my only Concern, and have all my Thoughts engaged, if not in Sin, at leaſt in what is on the very Brink of Sin, and puts me every Moment in Danger of offending.

Have Compaſſion on me, O God, in theſe ill Circumſtances, and mercifully deliver me from them. I lay my Unhappineſs before Thee; I own it as it is; and I ſincerely deſire thy Help, for being reſcued from it. O bleſſed Lord, if it be thy bleſſed Will, deliver me from this Unhappineſs; moderate my Affections; cut off all hurtful Exceſs; quiet my Thoughts; compoſe my Mind, and reſtore my Soul again to Liberty.

Help me, O Lord, in this, and let a Calm return, that I periſh not in this Storm. I am unhappy at preſent, and in great Danger; but all Things are in thy Power, and though I cannot command myſelf, yet, behold, O God,

God, all that is within me is ſubject to Thee. Command then, O God of Power, command, and make all my Paſſions obey; diſpoſſeſs my Heart of all Evil; let nothing rule there, but only Thou alone; be Thou there the only Lord and Sovereign, and thus let Peace be reſtored to my Soul.

In the mean Time, till this happy Hour appears, ſtrengthen me ſo far, at leaſt, by thy Grace, that I may reſiſt all the ſinful Part, and, upon no Motives whatever, be drawn into Evil. My Weakneſs is very great, and my Paſſion violent; what then muſt my Miſery be, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not in thy Mercy ſupport me? Aſſiſt me therefore with heavenly Strength, that, amidſt all Dangers, I may be faithful to Thee, and never comply with Paſſion in Contradiction to thy Law.

Be Thou likewiſe a Guide to me, and direct me, by the Light of thy Grace, that I may do nothing that is raſh or indiſcreet. This thy Help, O God, is neceſſary for me, becauſe I am very ſenſible how much Reaſon and Judgment are corrupted by Paſſion; and that theſe will eaſily find Arguments to juſtify what is wholly unreaſonable. Wherefore, apprehenſive of this Deceit, I beſeech Thee, O Lord, to take me into thy Protection, and ſecure me againſt all Snares; for my Danger is great, and I have no Security but in Thee.

O God, Thou haſt Delight in ſhewing Mercy to ſuch as call upon Thee in Diſtreſs; deſpiſe not now my Petition; and, though my Unworthineſs be great, yet let my Unhap-

Unhappineſs move Thee to Compaſſion Have Regard to my diſordered Soul, and leave me not now to myſelf, when, my Reaſon being blinded by Paſſion, I am like an Enemy contriving my own Ruin. Ah, my God, take Pity on me, and either deliver me from this Evil, or powerfully preſerve me, that it become not a Snare to me. And this one Thing, above all others, I aſk of Thee, that, being ſenſible of my Misfortune, I may be ſo wiſe as not wilfully to concur to the Encreaſe or Continuance of it. Give me this Government, O Lord, that I may not be unhappy through my own Folly. Give me Patience and Courage under all the Self-denials that are neceſſary for me; and, ſince I ſeek Help from Thee, help me, I beſeech Thee, in ſuch a Manner as Thou knoweſt beſt for me.

On ſome PARTICULAR OCCASIONS.

For the Choice of a State of Life.

O Eternal God, who art the Light of the World, and for whoſe Glory the whole Creation is ordained, to Thee I ſubmit myſelf at preſent, and my whole Life; and, that I may live to thy Glory, I beſeech Thee, in thy Mercy, to direct me in the Choice I am to make, that ſo, having Thee for my Guide, I may be led into ſuch a Way, as may be pleaſing to Thee, and proper for working out my Salvation.

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I confeſs I am under a total Darkneſs, as to what is to come; and that, as to my own Inclinations, they are ſo corrupt and blind, that, if I take them for my Counſel, I ſhall be in evident Danger of being miſled: Give me not therefore up, I beſeech Thee, to the Conduct of my own Weakneſs, or Paſſions, but take me, O God, into thy Care, and, by thy Grace, preſerve me from all Deluſion; direct me into ſuch a Way as may render me moſt acceptable in thy Sight, and moſt effectually contribute to my eternal Good.

Have Compaſſion therefore on me, and deliver me from the dangerous Raſhneſs of youthful Years; this I have Reaſon to fear, becauſe of the infinite Numbers ruined by this Way: And, who am I, that I can pretend to be ſecure, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not ſhew Mercy, and help me? Stand by me, therefore, and prevent theſe miſchievous Effects of my own Blindneſs. Let thy holy Grace make me, at all times, fearful of myſelf, and of the dangerous Indiſcretions to which I am expoſed: And ſince Thou haſt taught me, that to *take Advice*, to *hear my Parents Inſtruction*, is the ſureſt Way for eſcaping theſe Dangers; grant, O God, I may ever follow this Direction, and never do any Thing of Concern but with the beſt Advice.

But then here, O moſt gracious Lord, I aſk thy Grace to make me wiſe, in conſulting and giving Ear to ſuch as are beſt capable of adviſing, and from whoſe Mouth I may hear thy bleſſed Will. Wherefore I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, to deliver me from the deceitful Perſon,

Perſon, from the Flatterer and the Unwiſe; let no Affection biaſs my Judgment, nor Fondneſs incline me to hear thoſe, who either know not what they ſay, or propoſe more their own Intereſt than my Good. In this Point, O God, ſuffer me not to be deceived.

I aſk likewiſe, O merciful Lord, Thou wouldeſt prevent in me the Miſchiefs of thoſe Impreſſions which the World makes in the Souls of the Unwary; that I may not be deluded by its Honours, Greatneſs, or Riches. Let me not be bent upon any of theſe, with too much Eagerneſs, nor ſeek them as the Grounds of Happineſs: Rather, O God, may I be directed by Thee, to be ſolicitous for my ſpiritual and eternal Good; and, before all other Things, give this ſo far the Place, as to think nothing fit for a chriſtian Choice, where there is likely to be any Hazard of this. For, what can all other Things of this World profit me, if I loſe my Soul? And, may not this be juſtly feared, where there is Proviſion for every Thing elſe, and this alone put to the Venture of evident and apparent Danger?

As Thou therefore, O my God, art the Firſt of all Beings, and infinitely above all others, ſo grant that I may conſider Thee, in the firſt Place, and never permit any Kind of worldly Advantage to have the Preference in my Choice. For this End ſuffer me not, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to chooſe any State which either is in itſelf unlawful, or, according to common Practice, cannot eaſily be ſeparated from Injuſtice and Sin. For, if this be

be not prevented, how unhappy muſt my Circumſtances be, in depending for a Livelihood upon what is unlawful, and being every Day under the Temptation of doing what is unjuſt for Bread? Be ſo merciful therefore to me, O God, as not to permit this to be my unhappy Lot.

Have Compaſſion on me, O Father of Mercies, in this great Affair, on the Choice of which depends not only the Good of my whole Life, but likewiſe my Eternity. Be Thou my Director in it, and let no Kind of Weakneſs prevail in me. Let me do nothing raſhly, nothing inconſiderately: Let neither any ſudden, miſtaken Zeal, nor any worldly Paſſion deceive me; but let thy heavenly Light be my Guide. To Thee alone are known all my Weakneſſes, and by Thee alone are foreſeen all the Difficulties of every State; chooſe therefore, O Light eternal, as Thou knoweſt to be beſt for me. I reſign this whole Matter into thy Hands. I ſurrender myſelf entirely to Thee, and I beg Thee ſo to confirm me in what I now do, that I may never revoke it, or act contrary to what I profeſs.

To be thus privileged againſt all Indiſcretion, Paſſion, and ill Advice, is a Favour far above what I deſerve; but, I beſeech Thee, O Lord, not to regard my Unworthineſs, nor deal with me according to my Sins, but, according to the Multitude of thy own tender Mercies, be favourable to me. I here, in the Sincerity of a hearty Repentance, beg Pardon for whatever Sins I have committed againſt Thee; and

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it is now my hearty Deſire never more to provoke thy Anger againſt me. Hear me, O God, in this Point, and, by thy Grace, protect me from all Evil, that, by new Sins, I may not provoke Thee to deny the Protection I aſk, and leave me to the Unhappineſs of my own ill Choice.

Thus, O bleſſed Lord, truſting in thy Goodneſs to one that is undeſerving, I recommend this my Concern into thy Care, and, by this Means, hope to obtain thy Bleſſing.

Upon Undertaking any Buſineſs.

GOD of infinite Majeſty, and ſovereign Lord of all, I come here into thy Preſence to acknowledge thy univerſal Power, to which all Things are ſubject, and my univerſal Weakneſs, who, of myſelf, am able to do nothing. I confeſs, in this very Thing which I have undertaken, I can expect no Succeſs of Satisfaction, but as far as Thou ſhalt pleaſe to enable me, and give a Bleſſing to my Endeavours.

Wherefore behold, O God, I now proſtrate myſelf before Thee, moſt humbly beſeeching Thee to have Regard to my Weakneſs, and ſo to aſſiſt me as may be neceſſary for duly accompliſhing what I have undertaken. Give me Light and Underſtanding, that I may truly apprehend what belongs to my Charge, and be delivered from all the Miſchiefs of my own Overſight, Neglect, or Indiſcretion. Give me Strength of Mind to bear all Difficulties, and

that I may never offend Thee through Impatience, whatever Diſcouragements happen.

Let not my Unworthineſs turn away thy Favours from me, but mercifully forgive me all my Sins. And, that I may have the ſtronger Hope in thy Aſſiſtance, grant, O God, I may forſake my Sins, amend all my evil Ways, and, with a watchful Solicitude, labour every Day to be faithful in thy Service. For tho' I know Thou art found by thoſe that ſeek Thee, and art a continual Bleſſing to ſuch as, like obedient Children, walk in the Ways of thy Commandments; yet I know too, Thou forſakeſt thoſe that forſake Thee, and that the Wicked can have no true Confidence in thy Protection.

Thus, O merciful Father, Thou haſt made it not only my eternal, but alſo temporal Intereſt, to be faithful in ſerving Thee. Grant, I may thus ſeek thy Protection and daily Help, and that I may depend on no other Way of thriving, but by being always careful in thy Service.

And ſince Thou requireſt it of us, to perform with Fidelity and Diligence whatever we undertake, deliver me, I beſeech Thee, from all Careleſneſs, Sloth and Neglect: Give me Grace to overcome all ſuch Inclinations, and that I may not ſuffer a corrupt Nature to govern me, when I have undertaken, and profeſſed to be governed by Thee, and to do thy Will. Let it be therefore one of thy daily Bleſſings to me, to give me an induſtrious and active Spirit, and a Mind ſolicitous to do well, that I may perform

form whatever belongs to my Charge with Care and Diligence; and do Thou, O Lord, according to thy good Pleaſure, give a Bleſſing to it.

Hear my Prayer, O God, and go along with me in all I do; as Thou didſt give a Bleſſing to thy Servant *Jacob*, and make all Things proſper under his Hands: As Thou waſt always with thy Servant *Moſes*, and with *Joſhua*, and *Samuel*, and *David*, and thy protecting Mercies did accompany them at their going forth, and at their coming in, and in all their Undertakings; ſo, bleſſed Lord, let the ſame Mercies be ever with me, tho' unworthy of the leaſt of them, and, under thy Protection, may Succeſs attend me in every Part of my Duty.

Behold, O God, in thy Name I enter upon what I have undertaken; I offer it to thy Glory, to whom all Things belong: Accept it, I beſeech Thee, with all the Labours of it, and, by thy Bleſſing, may I ſee the Fruit of my Endeavours: For I deſire not the Proſperity of the Wicked, which turns all to their Misfortune; but I deſire the Succeſs of the Juſt, ſuch as is the Effect of thy Goodneſs, and in which Thou mayeſt be glorified. Bleſs me, O God, ſtrengthen me, and be ever with me.

Reſignation in any Buſineſs.

ALmighty God, by whoſe Power and Will all Things are governed both in Heaven and Earth, mercifully aſſiſt me in this Affair,

which I propoſe. What I deſign ſeems to me juſt and reaſonable; but, not knowing how far it may be agreeable to thy holy Will, I come here to lay it before Thee, and wholly to reſign it into thy Hands.

If it be according to thy good Pleaſure, and Thou ſeeſt it for my Good, I beſeech Thee to give a Bleſſing to it, and ſo to order all Things, by thy heavenly Influence, that it may came to a happy Iſſue. But, ſince we are ſubject to great Miſtakes, in what we propoſe, and that very often proves our Unhappineſs from which we had the Expectation of the greateſt Good; ſince we are often eager for ſuch Things which become to us very dangerous Snares, and the Seed of many Sins; therefore, O ſovereign Lord, in this preſent Affair, I no otherwiſe preſs for Succeſs, than as, in thy all-ſeeing Providence, Thou knoweſt it for my Good; and, if Thou ſeeſt it will prove otherwiſe, I then aſk for no other Bleſſing, but that Thou wilt find Means for manifeſting thy Will in the Diſappointment of what I propoſe. For, far be it from me, that I ſhould carry my Deſires contrary to thy Will, or preſs them any farther than they are for thy Glory, and my eternal Good.

Thus, O God, I commit this Affair entirely into thy Hands, and, whatever my Inclination be, I make not that the Meaſure of my Petition, but I reſign all to thy Will: Do as Thou knoweſt beſt: Thou art Lord of all, and I deſire Thou ſhouldſt govern in me. Grant only this, O God, that this may be,

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at all Times, the conſtant Diſpoſition of my Heart, to think and reſt in that, as beſt, whatever Thou appointeſt. Thus let it be with me; thus may I always deſire, always pray with Submiſſion to thy holy Will. Lord, in this, and in all other Things, may thy Will be done, and not mine.

In a Doubt, what is beſt to be done.

O God, who art the Light of the World, and a Guide of thoſe who put themſelves under thy Protection; behold, being at preſent under Difficulty, and not knowing what is beſt to be done, I ſeek Help from Thee, deſiring Thee to be a Guide to me, and to determine me in the Reſolutions I am to take.

My Deſire is to do that which is beſt; but this being hid from me, who am nothing but Darkneſs, ſubject to great Miſtakes and Indiſcretions, I beſeech Thee, O merciful God, be Thou a Light to me, and direct me; preſerve me from ill Advice, from inconſiderate and raſh Reſolution, from all other Effects of my own or others Weakneſs; and grant I may do that which may be moſt to thy Glory, and my own Good.

Thou haſt ſhewed this Mercy to thy Servants heretofore, in manifeſting thy Will to them, and directing ſuch as conſulted Thee. Thus Thou waſt a Guide to the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*, to *Joſhua*, to *Samuel*, to *David*, and many others: Have Compaſſion now on me, and ſhew

this Mercy to me likewiſe; that, having put myſelf into thy Hands, and, with all the Sincerity of my Heart, deſired thy Conduct, I may find thy Promiſes fulfilled, that Thou heareſt and helpeſt thoſe that call upon Thee.

O God, behold, I have no Confidence in myſelf, but all my Truſt is in Thee: Help me therefore, according to thy great Mercy; be my Light and my Guide; preſerve me from all Evil of Sin and Indiſcretion; and grant, I beſeech Thee, I may now do thy holy Will.

Reſignation in Pain.

SInce it is thy bleſſed Will, O Lord, to viſit me with this Illneſs, I am obliged to own the Juſtice of what Thou doſt, and to confeſs that Thou art merciful, even while Thou puniſheſt me, for that my Sins deſerve a much ſeverer Scourge.

But conſider, I beſeech Thee, O moſt merciful Lord, my great Weakneſs, and lay no more upon me than by thy Grace I ſhall be enabled to bear.

Give me Patience under this Trial, that I may bear it as becomes a Diſciple of Chriſt.

That I may bear it as my Croſs, which, by thy Appointment, is laid upon me, and which I ought to carry in the Spirit of my Redeemer.

It is he himſelf has commanded me to take up my Croſs, and follow him: Oh! that I could now follow him with a Submiſſion, Humility, and Patience like to his.

That now, when I am called to it, I may ſhew whoſe Diſciple I am. But

But this muſt be thy Gift, O God; for of myſelf I am nothing but Weakneſs and Sin.

Of myſelf I murmur, and am impatient at every Thing that thwarts my Inclination, or is uneaſy to me.

And now to bear it with Submiſſion and Peace; this, O Lord, muſt be the Effect of thy Mercy to me.

Shew Mercy therefore, O Lord, to thy Servant; have Compaſſion on me, and help me.

Help me, O God, and give me Comfort, as Thou didſt to *Moſes*, under all his Troubles.

Help me, O God, and give me Patience, as Thou didſt to *Job*, under all his Affliction.

Help me, O God, and be my Relief, as Thou waſt to *Hezechias*, on his Bed of Sickneſs.

Help me, O God, and give me Courage, as Thou didſt to *Daniel* in the Lion's Den.

Help me, O God, and give me Perſeverance, as Thou didſt to thy Servants, who, for thy Law, chearfully ſuffered all Manner of Torments, and even rejoiced in Death.

Infinite, I confeſs, O Lord, are the Inſtances of thy Mercy and Goodneſs to ſuch as have been under Trials.

Enough to raiſe up my Hopes, and give me Encouragement to ſeek Help from Thee.

To Thee, therefore, O God of Power and Mercy, I fly for Help; Thou art my Refuge in Tribulation.

Aſſiſt me now, I beſeech Thee, according to my Weakneſs; ſuccour me now according to my Wants.

This one Thing, at leaſt, grant me, that, with an entire Submiſſion, I may be reſigned to thy Will.

That I may embrace thy preſent Appointments with a Conformity, ſuch as is due from a ſinful Creature to the Juſtice of his God.

For, what are all my Profeſſions of being thy Servant, if now, knowing thy Will, I murmur againſt it?

What are my Profeſſions of being a Sinner, if, feeling thy Scourge, I rebel under it?

Suffer not this Weakneſs and Folly in me, O God; but give me Grace to be wiſe, in making a good Uſe of what I ſuffer.

I have followed my own Ways too much, and how often to thy Diſpleaſure? Now, O God, let it be my Endeavour to follow thine.

If Nature be uneaſy, let it be ſo. I have too much favoured it hitherto, even to the Offence of Thee, my God; and is it not juſt it ſhould now ſuffer?

It is moſt juſt, O God, it is moſt juſt: And, therefore, I now bow down before Thee, and, with Submiſſion, receive thy Scourge; confeſſing it to be juſt that the Sinner and the Sin be puniſhed.

O ſovereign Judge of the Univerſe, I receive this Pain as the Accompliſhment of thy holy Will, and as the juſt Puniſhment of my Sin; give me Grace to bear it as I ought; give me Grace to overcome the Unwillingneſs of Nature, and make it yield to thy Appointments.

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Since I confeſs Thee alone to be my God, let all that is within me bow down, and, in its Submiſſion, acknowledge Thee to be God: Let no rebel Humour be tolerated in me; but let all, with one Voice, cry out, Thou art Lord of all: Lord, thy Will be done.

Thus, O moſt gracious Lord, give me Strength from above, for the Remedy of my Weakneſs; and do as Thou knoweſt beſt for me, either relieve me in thy Mercy, or mercifully give me Grace to go under my Burthen with Patience.

Reſignation in Sickneſs.

O Eternal God, who art pleaſed to viſit me with this Illneſs, help me, I beſeech Thee, in thy Mercy, to bear it ſo, that, as it is the Chaſtiſement of my Body, ſo it may be for the Good of my Soul.

Have Compaſſion on my Weakneſs; and, in whatever Degree my Diſtemper ſhall be uneaſy, or afflicting to me; ſo, accordingly, O Father of Mercies, give me thy Grace and Strength to bear it.

Give me ſuch Patience, that I may receive with Submiſſion all the Uneaſineſs of my Diſeaſe, the Trouble of Remedies, as likewiſe, whatever Provocations I ſeem to have from thoſe that are about me.

Let thy heavenly Grace help me to govern my weak, corrupt, and rebellious Nature; that I may ſuppreſs all Inclinations to Murmuring or Impatience, that no one Word

may come out of my Mouth, which is the Effect of theſe Evils.

Help me in removing all inward Diſturbance, that, as often as my Uneaſineſs begins to riſe, I may turn my Heart towards Thee, and, by a Submiſſion to thy holy Will, reſtore Peace to my Soul.

May I at all Times remember, that thy Will is holy and juſt; and that it is my Duty to receive and approve whatever is appointed by Thee.

May I remember that, in my Time, I have received infinite and great Bleſſings from thy Hand, and that it is reaſonable for me to receive Troubles alſo, when Thou art pleaſed to order them.

May I remember, when my Diſtemper afflicts, that it is the Sharpneſs of the Scourge, which, by my Sins, I have drawn upon myſelf.

Let me always look upon the Hand which holds the Scourge; and, when I ſee it to be the Hand of Juſtice, the Hand of Thee, my God, let me then ſilence all Complaints; let me then bow down and adore.

Thus, O merciful Lord, by the Effect of thy Grace, may I be patient, and humble, and reſigned, throughout the whole Courſe of my Illneſs: And grant, O God, if it be thy bleſſed Will, that, being now under the Chaſtiſement of my paſt Sins, I may not give new Provocations, by adding ſtill new Sins to my former.

Shew

Shew this Mercy, likewiſe, to thy Servant, that I may be ſolicitous to do, and this without Delay, whatever is fitting, at this Time, either for ſettling my temporal Affairs, or doing Juſtice, or making Reſtitution where due, or aſking Pardon where I have done Injury, or making Peace where I have any Difference; and, above all, in my beſt Endeavours for a ſincere Repentance, and making my Peace with Thee.

In theſe, and ſuch other Particulars, ſuffer me, O God, to admit of no Neglect, or Delay; let me not be deceived with the Hopes of Recovery, or with the Fear of Death, or with the Difficulty of the Taſk, in Time of Sickneſs; for I know all theſe are Temptations, and, if hearkened to, may be the Occaſion of being ſurprized with ſudden and unprovided Death: From which, I beſeech Thee, O God, deliver me.

I heartily wiſh, O merciful Lord, I had made a better Uſe of my Time of Health, even ſo far, that I might have had nothing left to do in this Sickneſs: But the Neglect of this has been my great Fault, and I moſt humbly beg thy Pardon for it. Pardon me, O Lord, in thy Mercy, and grant that now I may, with a juſt Solicitude, lay hold of this Opportunity in which Thou art pleaſed to call upon me. I am certain it can never do me any Harm, to turn towards Thee, my God, and humble myſelf in Repentance; and who knows, but that, notwithſtanding all my paſt Omiſſions, Thou mayeſt ſtill

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be converted to thy Servant, and have Mercy?

That I may, this Moment, do one Part of my Duty, I now reſign myſelf into thy Hands, begging Thee to do with me as ſeems beſt in thy Sight. I earneſtly implore thy Mercy to raiſe me up, if it be thy holy Will, from this Illneſs, and to grant me yet more Time, wherein I may reform my Life, and learn to be more faithful to Thee. But, if this be not according to thy good Pleaſure, Lord, I make no Exceptions; I ſubmit to thy Sentence. Lord, thy Will be done; only this Mercy I aſk, that, by thy Grace, I may be directed and enabled to do whatever may be beſt to prepare my Soul for its Departure out of this World, and to meet with a joyful Welcome into Eternity from Thee, my Lord, and my God. Grant this, O God, and behold, with all the Powers of my Soul, I bow down, and ſay, Lord, thy Will be done.

In Sickneſs. To be repeated every Day.

IT being thy holy Will I ſhould be viſited with this Illneſs, I beſeech thy infinite Goodneſs to have Compaſſion on me, and to give me Grace to bear, with Patience and Submiſſion, all the Difficulties of it. Help me, O God, this Day, according, to my Neceſſities, and mercifully grant I may in no Kind offend Thee.

Deliver me, O bleſſed Lord, from this Sickneſs, and raiſe me up again, if it be thy holy

holy Will, that I may reform all the Diſorders of my Life, and more faithfully ſerve Thee. But ſince I aſk in this a Mercy, of which, through my Sins, I am unworthy, I therefore, as a Criminal, reſign myſelf to Thee, who art my Judge, to receive whatever Sentence is pronounced againſt me; believing it moſt juſt and reaſonable, thy Will ſhould be done in me.

But then, O God, be ſo merciful to thy Servant, as not to forſake me in my Diſtreſs, nor leave me to my own Weakneſs: For I can do nothing, O Lord, if left to myſelf. Stand by me, therefore, I beſeech Thee, all the Time of my Sickneſs; be Thou my Comfort, and my Strength; ſupport my Soul under all its Weakneſs; defend me againſt all Temptations and Snares, againſt all Impatience and Dejection, and let my Heart be ever ſhut againſt all Thoughts of Deſpair.

Rather, O moſt gracious Lord, help me, by thy Grace, to improve under my Sickneſs: May I confeſs, and adore, every Day, thy Juſtice, in the Puniſhment of Sin; may I offer, every Day, what I ſuffer, in Submiſſion to thy holy Will; may it help me to purify my Soul from all Corruption; may I learn from it, to deſpiſe the World, and all that is earthly; may it raiſe my Heart to the Deſire of a better Life; may it teach me to approach every Day towards Thee, by the Endeavours of a true Repentance, and every Hour, more and more convince me, that in Thee alone is my only Good, and that Death can be no Loſs to me, if I gain Thee.

Grant

Grant this my Petition, O merciful Lord, and ſo direct me by thy heavenly Light, that I may not omit, neglect, or delay any Thing, that is for my Soul's Good. Prepare me for whatever Thou haſt appointed; ſecure me againſt all the Flatteries and Terrors of the Enemy; and, above all Things, give me a ſincere Abhorrence of my Sins, that, whenever my Soul ſhall be ſummoned to appear before Thee, I may chearfully ſurrender it, and find Thee a loving Father, and merciful God. Grant this, O God, and have Mercy on me.

For one that is ſick.

O Almighty God, behold I recommend to thy fatherly Protection this thy Servant. Have Compaſſion on (him, her) and, if it be thy bleſſed Will, raiſe (him, her) up from the Bed of Sickneſs, and reſtore (him, her) again, that (he, ſhe) may be a Comfort to (his, her) Friends. We confeſs, O Lord, that all Things, both Life and Death, are in thy Power; and, if Thou commandeſt, there is nothing can reſiſt thy Will. Command then, we moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, O Lord, in Favour of thy Servant, that being reſtored to Health, both (he, ſhe) and we may praiſe and glorify thy Mercies.

Have Compaſſion on (him, her) now in this Diſtemper, and mercifully prepare (him, her) to go thro' whatever Thou haſt appointed. Be Thou (his, her) Comfort and Strength,

Strength, and ſuffer not the Enemy, in any Kind, to prevail againſt (him, her.) Touch his Heart, we beſeech Thee, from above, that he may turn it towards Thee; that he may be ſolicitous to do whatever his preſent Condition requires, both for Soul and Body; that he may ſeek Thee with all his Soul, and, by a ſincere Repentance, endeavour to obtain Pardon of all his paſt Offences. Forſake him not, O God, in this Day of his Diſtreſs, but, according to thy Promiſes, ſhew thyſelf a Father to him. Help him, O Lord, for in Thee is our Help.

For a Child ſick.

TO thy fatherly Goodneſs, O God, I recommend this Child; have Compaſſion on (him, her) and ſend him Relief, his Innocence has not provoked Thee, and we beſeech Thee not to puniſh our Iniquities in him. If, in thy comprehenſive Knowledge, Thou foreſeeſt his Life will be to thy Glory, raiſe him up, O Lord, that he may contribute to the Praiſe of thy Name, and be the Comfort of his Friends. But if he is likely to abuſe thy Mercy, and not to prove faithful in thy Service, then, O God, I make no Petition in his Behalf; do what ſeems good in thy Eyes: For Life can be no Mercy to him, whoſe Life is to be followed with eternal Death. Do therefore, O Lord, what is the greateſt Mercy to him; ſhew thyſelf a Father and help him, as Thou knoweſt beſt.

At the Death of a Child.

GIVE me Patience, O God, under this Trial: It is difficult to Nature to be thus deprived of its Comfort; but ſince Thou, O Lord, haſt done it, behold, I am ſilent; I bow down, and ſay, Lord, thy holy Will, and not mine, be done. This I ſay with my Lips, and I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to give me ſuch a true Conformity of Spirits, that my Heart may go with my Words, Lord, thy Will be done. Grant this, O God, that, now at this Time, I may join in Spirit with *Abraham*, and offer Thee this Sacrifice, with the Submiſſion of that holy Patriarch.

I muſt confeſs, O God, amidſt all my Uneaſineſs, Thou haſt done, as a moſt loving Father, in taking my Child out of this World, in this Time of Innocence, when there is nothing to obſtruct his eternal Happineſs. For what truer Comfort can there be, than that my Child is now delivered from the infinite Dangers of this wicked World, and, without any Hazard, ſecured of Bliſs? Can this be Matter of Complaint to a Believer? Can it be a Subject of Grief, that one is arrived ſafe in the Port, and paſſed all the Danger of Storms? Can I pretend to love my Child, if at ſo great a Preferment, as to be raiſed from Duſt to Glory, I lament, as if ſome ſtrange Misfortune had befallen him? Do not I ſee every Day the monſtrous Corruption of this World, enough to believe it a Happi-

neſs

neſs to be taken from it, and have it exchanged for Bliſs!

If my Child were now permitted to ſpeak to me, would it not juſtly reprove my Tears, and ſay, *If you loved me, you would rejoice, becauſe I am gone to the Father?* Would it not turn to me, and ſay, *Weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves?* I muſt confeſs, O God, there is too much Reaſon for ſuch Reproof; for, if I have any true Love for my Child, I am obliged to rejoice in its happy Poſſeſſion of Thee; and no Tears are due to him, but all to myſelf, who am yet in a State of Miſery, and, after many Difficulties and Storms, know not, whether I ſhall ever be ſo happy, or may not be loſt eternally. And is this ſuch a deſirable State, that I ſhould grieve, becauſe my Child is delivered from it! What if God ſhould, in Puniſhment of my Impatience, again replace him here, to go thro' all theſe Hazards! What if, in the Hazard, he ſhould miſcarry!

No, my God, I know he is well, and my Grief is all Self-love. But, where are the Bowels of a Parent, if I will not bear my Loſs, for his ſo great Gain? I ſubmit, O bleſſed Lord; it is all well, what Thou haſt done. I am unreaſonable and blind, and do not underſtand what is for my Good. Help me therefore, I beſeech Thee, to govern my Inclinations, to moderate my Paſſion, and teach me, with Peace, to ſubmit to thy Appointments. Now I have an Opportunity of making an Offering to Thee; Grant, O Lord,

I may

I may now do it, and that I may not leave that for Time to do, which, by a Chriſtian, ought to be done by the Strength of Reaſon and Faith. Suffer me not therefore any longer to be governed by Paſſion, and grieve like an Unbeliever; but now, thro' thy Grace, may I receive thy Orders with Chearfulneſs, and ſuffer as a Chriſtian.

At the Death of a Friend.

IT is now the Hour of Trouble; and now is the Time, in which I am called to ſhew myſelf a Chriſtian. My Comfort is taken from me, and Nature grieves; but it is Thou, O Lord, haſt done it, and therefore I am bound to ſubmit. But, O God, Thou knoweſt my Weakneſs, and to Thee is known, how great my Loſs is; and therefore I hope, Thou wilt pardon all my Impatience, ſtrengthen me under my Trial, and by heavenly Comforts refreſh my Soul.

Help me, O merciful Lord, I beſeech Thee, in this Hour, and ſuffer me not to be overwhelmed with Paſſion; Nature is ready to ſink, but ſtand Thou by me, O God, and ſupport me under this Storm: To Thee I fly for Refuge, for behold, the World is bitter to me, I am robbed of my Comfort: But what could I expect? If I place my Comfort in Things that are mortal, I could look for nothing elſe, but to be ſeparated from them. The Condition of this World is to be here only for a Time; and, if I forget this, it is my

my Fault. I am to be thankful for the Bleſſings I have had; but, it being only lent me, I cannot wonder, at its being demanded by him to whom it belonged.

I confeſs, O God, Thou art ſovereign Lord of all; Life and Death are in thy Hands; and all muſt be obedient to Thee. If Thou giveſt us Comforts, it is thy Mercy; and, if Thou again takeſt them away, it is thy Right, and no Body can aſk, Why Thou doeſt ſo? And why then do I grieve and murmur at what Thou haſt been pleaſed to order? O God, I own it is a Fault. For Thou art my Creator, and it is my Duty, who am but a poor Worm, to bend to thy Will in all Things, and approve it. I am a Sinner, and Thou art a juſt Judge; and, if Thou puniſheſt, it is what I ought to receive as my Due. If Nature then grieves as its Loſs, that does like itſelf: But, ſince Thou haſt bleſſed me with *Reaſon* and *Faith*, theſe ought to govern Nature, give a Check to whatever is immoderate in it, and bring it into Subjection to thy holy Will.

Grant therefore, O merciful God, that by Reaſon I may ſuppreſs all that is unreaſonable in my Grief. And where can be the Reaſon of indulging immoderate Grief? Can I again recall the Friend I have loſt, by my Grieving? Can I prevail with God, by this Exceſs of Grief, to refreſh my Soul with new Comforts? Can I do myſelf any Good, whether as to Soul or Body, by thus Grieving? Nothing of this is to be expect-

ed;

ed; for, by ſuch Paſſion, God is offended, and my Health prejudic'd. There can be no Reaſon then for thus afflicting myſelf: Wherefore, I beſeech Thee, O Lord, that I may ſo effectually make uſe of my Reaſon, as to expel from my Heart all that is unreaſonable.

Help me, O God, in this Particular, becauſe Nature is violent, and with Obſtinacy puſhes me on, to what is not agreeable to Reaſon or Faith; and if I act thus, like an Unbeliever, how can I expect thy Favour; I going on in thy Diſpleaſure, at a Time when I moſt want thy Help?

Shew Mercy therefore to me, and ſince the Caſe is common to all; ſince all muſt be ſeparated from their Friends, ſince *Abraham* is dead, and the Prophets are dead; ſince the Powerful, the Rich, and the Mighty of ſo many Ages paſt are all dead; ſince all, that are now alive, muſt certainly die; ſince my Misfortune is ſo far from being particular, grant, O merciful Lord, I may bear it with Submiſſion due to the neceſſary Conditions of this our mortal State; and that what, by thy Appointment, is made the Puniſhment of Sin, I may receive with the Humility of an Offender, who, knowing his Crime, peaceably ſubmits, without Complaint, to the Hand of Juſtice.

With this Submiſſion, O bleſſed Lord, reſtore Peace to my Soul, and grant me ſo much true Diſcretion, as, inſtead of lamenting what is loſt, to conſider what I may gain. How much would it be to my Soul's Advantage,

tage, if, diſguſting at periſhing Goods, I ſhould turn my Heart to thoſe that are eternal; if I ſhould deſpiſe all earthly Comforts, as moſt treacherous to their Admirers, and fix my Heart on thoſe, which cannot deceive nor forſake me! This, I queſtion not, is one Deſign of thy fatherly Providence, in viſiting us with Afflictions, that, finding the World bitter to us, we may take off our Affections from it, and turn to ſomething more laſting.

Grant, O God, I may make this Uſe of my preſent Affliction, take this Occaſion of falling out with a deceitful World, and think of no other Comforts, but in Thee. How much wiſer would this be, than to let fruitleſs Sighs conſume my Hours, and my Soul be waſted by ſullen Grief? How much better might I employ my Tears in repenting for my Sins, and letting Contrition have the Encloſure of my troubled Spirit? Ah, my God, this would certainly have a good Effect, even of eternal Joy. But now, as it is, I weep, and mourn, and afflict myſelf; but all to no Purpoſe.

It is the ſame as to my Affections; I ſet them on Creatures, and theſe ſoon forſake me. If I ſhould now turn them to Thee, my God, and ſeek no other Satisfaction, but in thy Goodneſs; this would be a Comfort that could never fail me, but would go on encreaſing even beyond the Grave. O moſt gracious Lord, ſhew this Mercy to thy Servant, that I may be ſo wiſe, to make this Advantage of my preſent Trouble. Then, O Lord, ſhall I have Reaſon to bleſs

bleſs thy Name for all Eternity, and date my Happineſs from what now ſeems the ſevereſt Scourge. Grant me Patience, O God, and help me to be thus wiſe to Eternity.

For one that takes evil Ways.

O God of all Comfort, and Father of Mercy, look with the Eye of Compaſſion upon this thy Creature, who has forſaken the Ways of Thee, his ſovereign Lord and Creator. Touch his Heart from above, that he may be ſenſible of his Iniquity; open his Eyes, that he may ſee his Unhappineſs; and give him ſuch effectual Grace, that he may break all his Bonds, and return, with all his Heart, to ſerve Thee, his Lord and his God.

Thou haſt publiſhed thy Mercies, O Lord, above all thy Works, and ſolemnly declared, Thou wilt not the Death of a Sinner, but that he be converted and live. Manifeſt now this Mercy, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee in this thy Servant; Call upon him, and open his Heart, that he may hear thy Voice; Thou haſt infinite Expedients for awakening Sinners, and ſeizing them with a Horror of their Crimes. Make uſe of ſuch here, as will prevail; omit nothing that may give him a Senſe of his Duty. Whatever Thou wilt here, O Lord, ſo he be not eternally miſerable.

Suffer him, O merciful Lord, no longer to walk in the Paths of Death, nor to be deluded with the Snares of Sin. For tho' by his Sins he become unworthy of all thy Favours, yet ſtill

ſtill he is the Work of thy Hands, and we beſeech Thee, not to deſpiſe what Thou haſt made, nor to let his Iniquities obſtruct thy Mercy: Eſpecially, ſince the greater his Unworthineſs is, the more glorious will be thy Mercy towards him. Help him therefore, O Lord, that he may be ſaved, and thy Name be for ever glorified for thy Mercy to Sinners.

O God, who didſt ſhew Mercy to thy Servant *David*, and, after his great Crimes, didſt touch his Heart with the Senſe of his Iniquities, and call him to Repentance: Shew the like Mercy, I beſeech Thee to this thy Servant, and grant him ſuch a lively Senſe of his own unhappy State, that, renouncing all his evil Ways, he may ſincerely repent of his Sins, and for the Time to come be faithful in thy Service.

God, by whoſe Mercy that wicked King *Manaſſes* was called from all his Abominations, and, by a true Repentance, was again received into thy Favour: Let the ſame Mercy awaken this thy Servant, and give him ſuch an Abhorrence of all the Evil he has done, that with Violence he may break from all the Occaſions of his Sin, and deſire no other Comforts, but in the Peace of a good Conſcience, in ſincerely loving Thee, and faithfully ſerving Thee.

O God, who hadſt Compaſſion on the *Niniviteſ*, and didſt remember them in thy Mercy, amidſt their manifold Crimes: Grant, I beſeech Thee, the ſame Bowels of Compaſſion may be moved upon this unhappy Sinner, and that, notwithſtanding all his Provocations, he

may

may ſtill find Thee a Father to him, ſuffer him not to periſh, O God, in his Wickedneſs, but mercifully call him to Repentance,

O bleſſed Jeſus, who cameſt into this World to call Sinners to Repentance; have Mercy on this thy Servant, and grant him true Repentance of all his Sins.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who cameſt to ſeek the loſt Sheep, behold here a poor, unhappy Sheep, that is gone aſtray: Follow him, I beſeech Thee, and by thy Grace bring him again into the Fold, where he may for ever hear thy Voice and follow Thee.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who, in weeping over *Jeruſalem*, didſt ſhew thy Compaſſion for Sinners; have Mercy on this Sinner, and grant, he may know the Time of his Viſitation, and underſtand the Things that are for his eternal Peace.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who didſt ſhew thy great Mercy, in calling *Matthew* from his ſinful State, in forgiving *Zaccheus*, *Magdalen*, *Peter*, and other Sinners: Have Mercy on this Sinner; powerfully call him from his Iniquities, and graciouſly forgive him.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who haſt offered thyſelf a Sacrifice for the Ranſom of Sin: May thy ſacred Blood plead for this unhappy Sinner, and, by the Merits of thy Paſſion, may all his Sins be forgiven.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who art ſeated at the Right Hand of the Father, to become an Advocate for Sinners; undertake, I beſeech Thee, the Cauſe of this Sinner, and, ſince all

all Things are in thy Power, obtain for him whatever Graces and Helps are neceſſary for quitting all his evil Ways, and becoming a new Creature: Grant this, O Jeſus, that Thou mayſt be glorified in the Converſion of ſuch a Sinner.

O bleſſed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, have Mercy on this unhappy Sinner; take from him all Obſtinacy and Blindneſs; ſoften his Heart, that he may receive the Impreſſion of thy holy Grace; and give him ſuch inward Strength, ſuch Diſcretion, ſuch chriſtian Reſolution and Courage, that, deſpiſing all earthly and ſinful Satisfaction, he may break from all the Occaſions of his Sin, and, purſuing the Way of Virtue, may find ſuch Comforts in it, as may carry him on with Perſeverance, till he comes at length to receive the Rewards Thou haſt promiſed to ſuch as faithfully return to Thee. Grant this, O God, and be Thou a God and a Redeemer to him.

For one who is Careleſs in his Duty, or takes greater Liberties than are fitting.

ALmighty and everlaſting God, look with Compaſſion on this thy Servant, whom I now recommend to thy particular Mercy. Open his Eyes, I beſeech Thee, that he may ſee and conſider the Duties which belong to him as a Chriſtian, and likewiſe the particular Obligations of his State. Give him Grace to obſerve all his Failings, and the many Ways in which he is wanting to his Duty.

For this End I moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, O bleſſed God, deliver him from all ill Company, and from ſuch hurtful Converſation as are an Encouragement to him in all his Weakneſs. Let it be thy Mercy to him, to ſee the great Injury theſe do him, to ſee the Vanity and Folly of all ſuch Satisfactions, and hence conceive ſuch a Diſlike, as to turn his Heart againſt them, and for ever to break from them.

Help him, O merciful God, in this great Point; give him Strength to ſtand againſt the Violence of all ill Cuſtoms, againſt the Force of Inclination, and all ſuch other Arguments as the Devil and the World make uſe of, in Defence of what is ſinful. Confirm him likewiſe, O God, againſt all other Snares, that he may no longer go on in ſuch Ways, as are ſo prejudicial to all his Concerns, both of Soul and Body, and ſo very afflicting to thoſe that belong to him.

For his more effectual Help in this, I beſeech Thee to correct all the Errors of his Judgment, and to root out all thoſe ill Principles which encourage him in his daily Neglects, and in the undue Liberties he takes. Seaſon his Mind, O God, with better Maxims, even with thoſe of the Goſpel; and from theſe, O bleſſed Lord, and not from corrupt Practice, may he take the Meaſures of a chriſtian Life.

From this Rule may he learn what it is to be a Chriſtian; how he ought to love Thee and fear Thee; and how ſolicitous he ought to be, in walking uprightly, according to all thy Commandments. From this

this may he learn, that the World is at Enmity with God, and that the Ways of the World are contrary to the Ways of God.

Make him likewiſe ſenſible, O merciful Lord, of all the Dangers of Sin, that he may be careful to avoid them. Give him a true Knowledge of his own Corruption, that he may be watchful in ſtanding againſt it.

Teach him alſo, O Lord, in thy Mercy, how great are the Sins of living an unprofitable Life, of not redeeming the Time, of neglecting Family or Eſtate, of waſting Money, of living in the continual Danger of Sin, of keeping ſinful, prophane, or atheiſtical Company, of being Witneſs to, and making a Divertiſement of what is diſpleaſing to God, of waſting Life in Vanity, Sloth, Prodigality, Intemperance, Gaming, and whatever elſe is agreeable to a corrupt Inclination and Self-love.

Convince him, O God, how contrary this is to what the Goſpel preſcribes, of loving God with all our Heart, of ſeeking firſt, and before all Things, the Kingdom of God, of hating the World, denying ourſelves; of putting off the old Man, of crucifying the Fleſh, of not being conformed to this World, of not living to ourſelves, of living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; of ſeeking the Things that are above, and doing all to Edification, of letting our Light ſhine before Men, of doing all to the Glory of God; of proving what is the good, acceptable, and perfect Will of God; of working out Salvation with Fear

and Trembling, of ſtriving to make our Election ſure, of preſenting our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, of being ever watching, ever prepared againſt the Time when the Spouſe will call.

Give him a Senſe, O God, of theſe Truths which the Goſpel preſcribes, as Rules to all its Profeſſors, and convince him, I beſeech Thee, how far he departs from them. Let this be a ſeaſonable Confuſion to his careleſs, diſſipated, and worldly Soul, and put him upon Reſolutions of reforming all his preſent Diſorders, and of being truly in Earneſt in what belongs to Eternity. Grant this, O merciful Lord, that we may have the Comfort of ſeeing him reformed, his Soul have the Benefit, and Thou, O God, the Glory: To whom be all Praiſe and Glory for ever.

On a Journey.

TO thy Protection, O God, we recommend ourſelves in this Journey: Accompany us, we beſeech Thee, in all our Ways, and ſuffer not the Enemy to have any Power over us. Be Thou, O merciful Lord, our Security againſt all Dangers: Preſerve us from the Hands of Robbers, and let no Violence be offered to us. Deliver us likewiſe from all other Misfortunes, and let no ill Accident interrupt the Comfort of our Journey, or ſtop us in our Way.

Preſerve

Preſerve us in Health, and grant us a ſeaſonable Time. Be Thou our Guide, and our Helper; and let it be thy Mercy to us, to keep us from all Kinds of Sin; that, while we are in Want of thy Protection, we may not provoke Thee to forſake us, by rendering ourſelves unworthy of what we aſk.

O God, who didſt call *Abraham* out of his Country, and waſt both his Guide and Protector in all his Way: Shew us now the like Mercy, and, under thy Conduct, may we come ſafe to our Journey's End.

O God, who, by thy Wonders, didſt lead *Moſes* through difficult Ways; who, both by Day and Night, waſt a Guide to him; didſt ſupport and relieve him in all his Diſtreſs, and was his Security in the Midſt of the greateſt Dangers; grant, we beſeech Thee, that, moved by theſe Wonders of thy fatherly Goodneſs, we may entirely confide in thy Protection, and that, whatever Difficulties appear, we may ever retain this Hope, and not fail of that Aſſiſtance which Thou haſt promiſed to ſuch as put their Truſt in Thee. Grant this, O God; in thy Name we begin our Journey; let us go on in Peace, and happily finiſh it; through Chriſt, our Lord. *Amen.*

For a Happy Death.

O God, by whoſe Appointment I am here, in the Pilgrimage of this Life, having Breath lent me for a Time, but, being ſoon to ſurrender it up into thy Hands who gaveſt

and Trembling, of ſtriving to make our Election ſure, of preſenting our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, of being ever watching, ever prepared againſt the Time when the Spouſe will call.

Give him a Senſe, O God, of theſe Truths which the Goſpel preſcribes, as Rules to all its Profeſſors, and convince him, I beſeech Thee, how far he departs from them. Let this be a ſeaſonable Confuſion to his careleſs, diſſipated, and worldly Soul, and put him upon Reſolutions of reforming all his preſent Diſorders, and of being truly in Earneſt in what belongs to Eternity. Grant this, O merciful Lord, that we may have the Comfort of ſeeing him reformed, his Soul have the Benefit, and Thou, O God, the Glory; To whom be all Praiſe and Glory for ever.

On a Journey.

TO thy Protection, O God, we recommend ourſelves in this Journey: Accompany us, we beſeech Thee, in all our Ways, and ſuffer not the Enemy to have any Power over us. Be Thou, O merciful Lord, our Security againſt all Dangers: Preſerve us from the Hands of Robbers, and let no Violence be offered to us. Deliver us likewiſe from all other Misfortunes, and let no ill Accident interrupt the Comfort of our Journey, or ſtop us in our Way.

Preſerve

Preſerve us in Health, and grant us a ſeaſonable Time. Be Thou our Guide, and our Helper; and let it be thy Mercy to us, to keep us from all Kinds of Sin; that, while we are in Want of thy Protection, we may not provoke Thee to forſake us, by rendering ourſelves unworthy of what we aſk.

O God, who didſt call *Abraham* out of his Country, and waſt both his Guide and Protector in all his Way: Shew us now the like Mercy, and, under thy Conduct, may we come ſafe to our Journey's End.

O God, who, by thy Wonders, didſt lead *Moſes* through difficult Ways; who, both by Day and Night, waſt a Guide to him; didſt ſupport and relieve him in all his Diſtreſs, and was his Security in the Midſt of the greateſt Dangers; grant, we beſeech Thee, that, moved by theſe Wonders of thy fatherly Goodneſs, we may entirely confide in thy Protection, and that, whatever Difficulties appear, we may ever retain this Hope, and not fail of that Aſſiſtance which Thou haſt promiſed to ſuch as put their Truſt in Thee. Grant this, O God; in thy Name we begin our Journey; let us go on in Peace, and happily finiſh it; through Chriſt, our Lord. *Amen.*

For a Happy Death.

O God, by whoſe Appointment I am here, in the Pilgrimage of this Life, having Breath lent me for a Time, but, being ſoon to ſurrender it up into thy Hands who gaveſt it,

it, grant, I beſeech Thee, I may be prepared for that Moment, that, whenever my Soul ſhall be ſummoned to appear before Thee, it may find, in Thee, the Comforts of a loving Father and merciful Judge.

For this End I implore thy particular Grace, that my Life may be a daily Preparation for Death, and that I may live every Day as if it were to be my laſt. That I may be thus wiſe to Eternity, grant, O bleſſed Lord, I may every Day call myſelf to an Account, and look into the true State of my Soul; ſuffer me not, I beſeech Thee, to tolerate any ſinful Practice within myſelf, nor to go on blind under the Enjoyment of a falſe Peace, nor continue in any Guilt under any Pretext whatever.

Let it be my continual Endeavour to war againſt Sin, and to be watchful in avoiding all the Dangers and Occaſions of it. Give me Diſcretion in diſcerning all the Snares of the World, or corrupt Practice, of the Devil and Self-love, and Strength to ſtand againſt them. Let a ſincere Repentance cancel all my paſt Guilt, and may it be my conſtant Practice, by daily Sighs of a contrite Heart, to wipe away the Sins of every Day. And therefore far be it from me, O God, to delay the Amendment of my Life, or to put my Confidence in a Death-bed Repentance. This, I am ſenſible, is a very great Deluſion, the Loſs of infinite Souls: From this Blindneſs, O God, deliver me.

Thus,

Thus, O blessed Lord, may I go on, still using my best Endeavours to improve in Virtue, to do good to all, and, by good Works, to make my Election sure. May my Heart be inflamed with thy holy Love, ever solicitous to walk in thy Commandments, and, both in doing and suffering, to do thy Will. In this Method may I live on in this World, but waiting till my Change comes for a better.

And, when this comes, stand by me then with thy almighty Power, and be my merciful Protector. Let not the Enemy prevail against me; but comfort my Soul with thy infinite Mercies. Preserve me from all Temptations, but, above all, from Despair and Presumption. Secure me against all inward Disturbance and Terrors, and grant this one Petition, that, giving up my Soul full of Faith, Hope, and Charity, I may meet with this happy Welcome from Thee: *Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter into the Joy of thy Lord.* Grant this, O God, through the Merits of my Redeemer, that I may glorify thy holy Name for all Eternity.

For all that are now in their last Sickness and Agony.

O GOD, the Comforter of the Distressed, look with Compassion, I beseech Thee, on all those who are now in their last Sickness, and are to have no Relief but by Death; give them a Sense of their Danger and great Duty, that they may make the

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For all that are now in their laſt Sickneſs and Agony.

O GOD, the Comforter of the Diſtreſſed, look with Compaſſion, I beſeech Thee, on all thoſe who are now in their laſt Sickneſs, and are to have no Relief but by Death; give them a Senſe of their Danger and great Duty, that they may make the

beſt Uſe of whatever Time yet remains, to prepare for their appearing before Thee. Grant, O merciful God, that as many of them as are under any Deluſion of Errors, may now renounce all ſuch Errors, and, manifeſting their hearty Deſires of receiving all thy ſaving Truths, may, by the Sincerity of ſuch Deſires, be, in Spirit, united to the Number of thy Faithful.

Give them all a ſincere Repentance of whatever Sins they have committed, and grant they may omit nothing that is neceſſary for making their Peace with Thee. Direct them in ſatisfying all whatever Duties Juſtice or Charity may demand of them; ſo to make Reſtitution for all the Wrong they have done, and to be reconciled from their Hearts with every Neighbour.

And for thoſe, O God, who are now in their Agony, ſhew Thyſelf a merciful Father to them; be Thou their Comfort and Strength, and, amidſt all their Anguiſh, refreſh their Souls with heavenly Light. Forſake them not, O God of all Comfort, in this Hour of their Diſtreſs, and let not any Unworthineſs turn away thy Mercies from them. Give them Strength againſt all Temptations and Snares; quicken their Faith, and confirm them in Hope, that no Terrors whatever may be able to deject them. Grant them a lively Confidence in the Merits of their Redeemer, and let that infinite Price, paid for Sinners, be their Support againſt all immoderate Fears. Grant, O God, they may fly to Thee for Refuge, and that, ſeeing nothing but Grounds of Deſpair from their own Weakneſs, they may

may lay hold of the Blood of thy only Son; may reſt in the Arms of thy infinite Goodneſs, and in the Promiſes of thy Mercy, and, thus raiſed up with Hope, may ſurrender their Souls, with Comfort, into thy Hands. Hear this my Petition, O moſt merciful Lord, in Behalf of theſe poor Souls; relieve them, I beſeech Thee, in their Diſtreſs, and, by comforting Refreſhments, may they now find Thee to be their God.

For ſuch as ſeek the Truth.

O Bleſſed Jeſus, who art the eternal Truth, and haſt promiſed, that all that ſeek ſhall find; fulfil now thy Promiſes, I beſeech Thee, in all thoſe Chriſtians, who, being engaged in Error, are ſincerely deſirous to find the Truth of thy Goſpel. Have regard to their Deſires, and hear their Sighs. Be Thou a Light to them, direct them in ſeeking, and give a Bleſſing to their Endeavours. Confirm them againſt all Miſtakes, and againſt the Deluſions of all thoſe, whoever they be, who lie in wait to deceive. Let not worldly Motives prevail with them, while they are in Search for Heaven; and give them Courage to deſpiſe all for the Sake of Truth. O Jeſus, Thou calleſt upon all to come to Thee; behold, theſe call upon Thee, they deſire to come to Thee; ſhew Mercy to them, I beſeech Thee, and hear their Prayers.

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In Doubts of Conſcience.

HAVE Compaſſion on me, O God, and mercifully deliver me from the Perplexity in which I am; be a Helper to me, and direct me in fulfilling thy bleſſed Will. Thou ſeeſt the Danger in which I am of ruining myſelf; of being miſled by my own deceitful Paſſions; of being drawn into the Snares of the Enemy; of framing to myſelf a falſe, raſh, and erroneous Conſcience; of miſtaking Light for Darkneſs, and Darkneſs for Light. And, if this be my unhappy Condition, what will become of my Soul?

Direct me, therefore, in this important Enquiry, O my God; and never let me be ſo miſerable as to forſake my Duty, and loſe my Soul. As Thou didſt ſhew Mercy to *Cornelius*, and direct him to *Peter*, by whom he was to be taught the Way to Heaven: As Thou didſt ſhew Mercy to *Saul*, and ſent him to *Ananias*, by whom he was to be inſtructed concerning thy holy Will: So likewiſe, O God of infinite Goodneſs, ſhew Mercy to me, though an unworthy Sinner, that I may both have Light to know my Duty, and Courage to comply entirely with it.

Hear my Prayer, O God, in this great Affair of Eternity, and ſo temper my Soul, by thy Grace, that, while I ſeek the Truth, I may not be obſtinate againſt it. In order to this, I beſeech Thee to take from me all Blindneſs and Corruption of Judgment: Let no

no Kind of Intereſt, worldly Conſiderations, or human Reſpects, put any Biaſs upon me; let not Education, Cuſtom, or Affection, prevail againſt Truth; but let my Soul be prepared with that Freedom as is due to Thee.

Aſſiſt me, moſt merciful Father, in this Propoſal which I have before me; give me Underſtanding and Courage, as the Affair requires, and ſuffer me not to be deluded while, Thou knoweſt, my whole Deſire is to find Thee, and to do thy Will. Stand by me, O God, and be Thou my Guide; for thus only can I come to Thee.

For the Church of Chriſt.

O God, who, by the Blood of Thy only Son, has purchaſed to Thyſelf a Church, and which was ſo loved by Chriſt, thy Son, that he gave himſelf for it; grant, I beſeech Thee, that the Mercy of this thy own Inſtitution may never fail, but that it may ſtill be ſecured under the Protection of the ſame Power and Goodneſs by which it was at firſt ordained. Let thy holy Spirit watch over it, to lead it into all Truth; and may thy almighty Power make good what thy Mercy to Man has promiſed, That the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

Purge it, I beſeech Thee, from all Corruptions and Abuſes, and mercifully take away all Scandals from it. Be Thou a Bleſſing to all its Paſtors; may nothing diſedifying be found in them, that their Miniſtry be not blamed.

Make

Make them, as ſo many Lights, ſhining to the World; may nothing worldly, but only a Zeal for thy Law, govern in them.

Have Mercy likewiſe on the whole Flock, where-ever ſpread throughout the World. Preſerve them in Peace and Truth, and may they follow Righteouſneſs, as becomes the Members of the myſtical Body of Chriſt their Head.

May its ſaving Truths be received throughout the World, as Thou haſt promiſed, and all Nations of the Earth be united in one Fold. For which End I beſeech Thee to have Mercy on all thoſe barbarous People, who, being yet in Darkneſs, have not the Knowledge of Thee and thy Chriſt. Provide them Means, O merciful God, by which thy Goſpel may be preached to them, and prepare their Hearts to receive it, that, being thus enlightened by Faith, they may partake of the Redemption which Chriſt has wrought for them.

For the State of Chriſtendom.

O God, by whoſe Mercy ſo many Nations of the *Gentiles* have been converted to the Faith of Chriſt, perfect now, I beſeech Thee, this Mercy to them, that, by their own Corruption, or Blindneſs, they may not be deprived of that Happineſs which thy fatherly Goodneſs has deſigned for them.

Give them all a ſincere Zeal for Truth, even for that Truth which was delivered to them by the Apoſtles. Root out all Hereſies from amongſt

amongſt them, whatever and where-ever they be; take from them all that Blindneſs, Deluſion, and Perverſeneſs, by which Errors and Corruptions are maintained with Zeal, which belongs only to thy Truths. Heal all their Schiſms, by which a Scandal is brought upon the chriſtian Name, and is become a Reproach to Unbelievers.

O bleſſed Jeſus, who haſt ſhed thy Blood for the Salvation of Man, look upon the unhappy State of divided *Chriſtendom*, and have Compaſſion on it. See how thy glorious Inſtitution is disfigured; Confuſions and Schiſms are broken in where Thou commandeſt Unity and Peace to be kept: Animoſities, Malice, and Revenge have taken the Place of that mutual Love which Thou didſt ſo ſtrictly enjoin its Profeſſors; ſo that now, inſtead of loving (the Mark of thy Diſciples) they ſeek to deſtroy one another; and thy Name is blaſphemed, thro' their Diſorders and Wickedneſs who confeſs it.

This is the Deformity of thoſe that call themſelves thy People: Have Compaſſion, O Jeſus, and, in thy great Mercy, ſend Relief. Raiſe up the Spirit of the Primitive and Apoſtolick Times, and let the Enemy no more prevail, to the Ruin of ſo many Souls, and the Infamy of thy moſt holy Profeſſion. Chaſe away the Spirit of worldly Intereſt and Pride from their Hearts, who undertake to teach the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt and his Goſpel, and eſtabliſh in them ſuch a ſincere Deſire of a General Peace, that they may make it the

Subject

Subject of their daily Prayers, and Endeavours, to recover the Unity of the firſt Believers, and to ſee them all, with one Faith and one Mouth, giving Glory to God.

Preſerve likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, all chriſtian Princes in a good Correſpondence of Peace, and ſo ſettle all publick Affairs, as Thou knoweſt may moſt effectually contribute to the publick Good of *Chriſtendom*, and the Glory of thy holy Name. Wherefore I moſt earneſtly implore thy Grace, in behalf of all chriſtian Princes; take them all into thy Protection, and give them ſuch a Spirit of true Piety and ſolid Wiſdom, that they may be able to ſatisfy their great Charge for the Good of their People; and not only be ſolicitous for worldly Greatneſs, but much more how they may concur in removing Scandals, in encouraging Virtue, and eſtabliſhing Unity amongſt all that believe in Chriſt.

For this End, let it be thy Mercy to provide them with ſuch Council as may be Men of Principles; ſuch as, influenced by ſolid Religion, will give the publick Good, at all times, the Preference to their own Intereſt, Ambition, or other private Concerns; and who are not to be prevailed on to betray the Cauſe of Juſtice and Truth.

Grant, likewiſe, O merciful God, to all Paſtors, in whatever Communion they be, ſuch a Spirit, that they may daily lament the Diviſions of *Chriſtendom*, and expreſs a common Zeal for healing them. Let this Spirit be ſuch as was given to the Apoſtles, not of Fierce-

Fierceneſs and Paſſion; but of Meekneſs; may the ſame heavenly Light attend them, to diſcover to them the Things that are for Peace; and, in this holy Diſpoſition, may they all unite their Labours, and have thy Bleſſing for bringing all to a good Effect. O God, how glorious would *Sion* be, were all united in one Faith!

For our Nation.

O Sovereign Lord, to whom all Kingdoms of the Earth are ſubject, under whoſe Protection they are ſafe, and by whoſe Bleſſing alone they can proſper; have Mercy on this Nation, I beſeech Thee, and make it happy under Thy Protection and Bleſſing.

Remove from it all thoſe Evils which, in any Kind, are a Provocation to Thee. Thou ſeeſt, O God, the diſtracted Condition of it, in Matters of Religion; and, amongſt theſe many Diviſions, Thou knoweſt who are the Profeſſors of thy Apoſtolick Truths. To theſe Truths, I beſeech Thee, O God of infinite Mercy, give a Bleſſing; direct all to them by thy heavenly Light, and may it be thy Bleſſing to this People, to unite all in the Profeſſion of them.

As the Truth is known to Thee, ſo likewiſe are all Errors, Corruptions, falſe Doctrines, Hereſies, and Schiſms. And becauſe all theſe are very diſpleaſing to Thee, and therefore injurious to as many Souls as are unhappily engaged in them; hence, with all the

the Earneſtneſs of my Soul, I lay them before Thee, and, without any Exception of Congregation, or Perſon, I emplore thy Goodneſs for the Remedy of them, whatever and whereever they be.

For this End, I beſeech Thee, O God, to give to all Teachers, and People, a Zeal for Truth; and may this Zeal, O bleſſed Lord, be ſo impartial in them, as heartily to beg thy Bleſſing on that which Thou knoweſt to be the Truth; without any Reſtriction laid by Education, Miſtake, or Intereſt. In this, O God, may all be united: And, let the Sincerity of this Requeſt find ſuch Acceptance with Thee, as to extend thy Mercy to all, in removing Obſtinacy and Blindneſs; and by communicating to all a true Light, by which all thoſe, whoever they be, who are in Error, may diſcern their Errors, and forſake them, and thoſe, who profeſs the Truth of thy Goſpel, may be confirmed in the Profeſſion of it.

For carrying on this great Work, inſpire, O God, both Teachers and People, with the Spirit of Moderation and Meekneſs, that all may have a true Compaſſion for one another; that they may lay aſide all Rancour and Malice, and, putting on the Bowels of Charity, may ſtrive, with a holy Emulation, to outdo each other, in Tenderneſs and brotherly Love. Thus may all contribute to the Salvation of all, and, in one Aſſembly, come to praiſe thy Name, with one Heart, and with one Mouth. Grant this, O God, I beſeech Thee, and ſhew Mercy to this Nation.

Enlarge

Enlarge this thy Mercy, moſt gracious Lord, by taking from among us the Spirit of Atheiſm, Irreligion, and Prophaneneſs. Theſe are the greateſt of Evils, and we cannot expect thy Scourges to be removed, as long as this Infidelity finds ſuch Encouragement amongſt us. Help us, therefore, I beſeech Thee, and put a Stop to this growing Evil. Touch the Hearts of thoſe unhappy ones, O God, who thus openly make War againſt Thee, and help to corrupt the Minds of Youth, propagating their wicked Principles amongſt thoſe whoſe better Education ought to give them an Abhorrence of ſuch Converſation. In this Particular, I beſeech Thee, ſhew Mercy to us, that we may not again be delivered up to Infidelity, as has been the ſad Fate of many Nations, once Chriſtians, but now having renounced this Name.

Another Mercy I ſtill aſk of Thee, that Thou would'ſt vouchſafe to purge this Nation from all thoſe notorious Crimes by which thy Anger is ſo much provoked againſt us; from Uſury and Uncleanneſs, from Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, from Prodigality and Idleneſs, from Injuſtice, Frauds, and Malice, from Sedition, Pride, and all Kinds of Uncharitableneſs; and whatever others there are, by which we are made the Object of thy Diſpleaſure. In all theſe Diſtempers, O God, be Thou our Phyſician, and mercifully deliver us; ſend thy holy Spirit amongſt us, by which all thoſe, who walk in the Ways of Iniquity, and have departed from Thee, their God, may have a

true

true Senſe of their unhappy State; may be aſhamed of their Folly and Sin; may abhor their interior Deformity, and reſolve, in Earneſt, upon beginning a new Life.

Hear this my Petition, O God, that we may become a choſen People, holy and acceptable in thy Sight; that we may walk in all Precepts, obſerve thy Ordinances, and thus prepare for thoſe great Bleſſings promiſed to ſuch as ſeek Thee, and ſerve Thee.

And, in this, O God, grant that all thoſe who have the largeſt Portion of earthly Bleſſings, may be an Example and Encouragement to the reſt. For this End, I beſeech Thee, to ſhew thy particuiar Mercy to them; give them a true Senſe of thoſe Bleſſings by which Thou haſt diſtinguiſhed them from infinite others, who are to labour for Bread; and direct them, by thy Grace, to make a good Uſe of what they have received. Teach them what Juſtice and Gratitude demands of them; and, how great is the Crime of abuſing thy Favours in the Service of Vice.

Grant, O God, they may, in all Points, live as becomes Chriſtians; that they may renounce all prophane and extravagant Liberties, that they may not conſume their Lives and Eſtates in Luxury, Gaming, and Intemperance; but that, being zealous in forſaking and diſcountenancing all Evil, they may ſtudy to do Good in their Generation, be the Comfort of their Families, the Honour of their Nation, and become as eminent, in all the Practices of a virtuous Life, as they are in the Rank which they hold in this World. Give

Give to all others the Bleſſings which are peculiar to their reſpective States, that they may faithfully ſatisfy the Obligations belonging to them. Grant, O God, they may have a Zeal for thy Law; may obſerve thy Precepts; may be obedient to their Governors; may live in Peace and Charity with all; and, ſtriving to encreaſe in all Good, may be found worthy to partake of thy Promiſes.

Shew this Mercy, O God, to this Nation, take away all thy Scourges from it, and repleniſh it, I beſeech Thee, with heavenly Bleſſings, that we may for ever praiſe thy Name, and Thou be glorified amongſt the Nations.

In Publick Calamity.

I Confeſs, O ſovereign Lord, the Juſtice of the Scourge that is upon us; we have provoked it by our Iniquities; our manifold Crimes have drawn it upon our own Heads, and we are obliged to confeſs before Thee, that it is not Thou, O Lord, but our own Sins, are become our Puniſhment.

But, if our Puniſhment be from ourſelves, our Relief muſt come from Thee, O Lord. Behold then, having no Confidence in ourſelves, but, in the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, we proſtrate ourſelves before Thee, confeſſing our Iniquities, and appealing to thy Goodneſs to have Compaſſion on us.

Look upon us, we beſeech Thee, and, with the Eye of Pity, have regard to our Miſery. See what we ſuffer, and, in thy Mercy, ſend

us

us Relief. Let not thy Inheritance be waſted, nor thy People be conſumed; but, for the Honour of thy Name, ſuccour thoſe who believe and put their Truſt in Thee.

Let thy Wrath, O God, be appeaſed upon us; let not thy Anger abide for ever; for, though we are unworthy, and can pretend to no Favour, yet ſtill thy Mercies are infinite; and it is for the Glory of thy Goodneſs, to help thoſe who are in Diſtreſs. Nay, Thou haſt promiſed to hear ſuch as call upon Thee in their Tribulation, and to be a Comforter to thoſe who, in their Affliction, ſend up their Sighs to Thee.

Hear, us, therefore, for behold, we are delivered up to Deſtruction, and our only Help is in Thee. We call upon Thee, we beg Thee to have Compaſſion; we appeal to the Bowels of thy tender Mercies, and beſeech Thee to appear in our Relief. Have Mercy on us, O God, have Mercy on us, and take from us the Scourge which we deſerve for our Sins.

O God, who, in former Ages, haſt ſignalized thy Mercies in ſparing thy People, when, for their great Iniquities, Thou hadſt reſolved to deſtroy them; and in often removing thy Judgments, which were the Puniſhment of their Sins: Let the Mercies of the new Law equal thoſe of the old, and though the ſevereſt of Judgments be due to our Sins; yet have Compaſſion, O God, and let thy Mercy take Place: Puniſh us not, we beſeech Thee, according to our Unworthineſs, but

ſpare

ſpare thy People, now humbling themſelves before Thee, and manifeſt thy Goodneſs for the Glory of thy Name.

O God, who didſt hear thy Servant *David*, and, upon his Humiliation, commanded the deſtroying Angel to ſheath his Sword; let the ſame Compaſſion now touch Thee; receive our Petition with Favour, and mercifully prevent the Ruin that threatens us.

O God, who, by thy Mercy, didſt invite the rebellious *Iſraelites*, and, upon their Repentance, didſt promiſe to remove thy Judgments, with which they were then afflicted for their Sins: Be no leſs favourable to us; but, ſince we own the Juſtice of the Hand that is upon us, and now freely ſeek to Thee for Shelter, receive our Submiſſion, and, granting us a true Repentance, let us experience thy Mercy in being delivered from all Evils.

O Jeſus, who, by thy almighty Power didſt deliver thy Apoſtles from the Storm in which they were in Danger of periſhing; and didſt mercifully ſtretch forth thy Hand to *Peter*, when he was now ſinking under the Waves; ſhew the like Mercy to us, thy Servants; and, ſince we call upon Thee, ſuffer us not to periſh in this Storm. Shew rather thy Power, and command a Calm; in the mean Time, ſtretch forth thy Hand of Mercy to us; ſupport our Weakneſs; give us Patience, Courage, and Perſeverance, that we faint not, but abide faithful to the End.

For

For PARENTS.

For Iſſue.

O God, who haſt appointed the State of Marriage for the Propagation of Mankind, and for filling up the Seats of Glory in thy eternal Kingdom; grant, I beſeech Thee, that, being engaged in this State, I may obtain thy Grace, for duly ſatisfying all the Obligations of it, and that, by thy Bleſſing I may become fruitful.

It was Thou, O God, who ſaidſt to our firſt Parents, *Encreaſe and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth:* And, by thy Bleſſing, was their Seed multiplied, and they ſaw their Childrens Children to many Generations. Grant, O moſt ſovereign Lord, that, being deſcended of their Seed, I may partake of their Bleſſing, and from me alſo may the Number be encreaſed, who may faithfully ſerve Thee here on Earth, and be admitted, at length, to the Fellowſhip of thy Glory.

O God, by whoſe particular Favour was taken from *Rachael* and *Hannah* the Reproach of their Barrenneſs, and the Comfort of Children was given to them; ſhew the like Mercy to me, and grant me the Comfort I now aſk, that, being delivered from Barrenneſs, I may bleſs Thee in my Generation, and, mindful thy Favours, may for ever praiſe thy Name.

I con-

I confeſs, O God, it is by thy Power and Goodneſs all Creatures bring forth their Fruit: The Earth, the Sea, the Fowls of the Air, with all other Things that have any Kind of Life in them: None can give any Encreaſe, but as it is thy Gift in them: Wherefore I come now, humbling myſelf before Thee, acknowledging this thy Power, and confeſſing that on this Power is my Dependance. Be favourable therefore to me, I beſeech Thee, in this Point, and let not my Unworthineſs turn away thy Mercies from me.

But while I make this Petition, yet ſtill, O God, it is with an entire Submiſſion to thy bleſſed Will; if it be for thy Honour, and Thou ſeeſt it for my Good: Far be it from me to deſire any Thing which may not be conducing to thy Glory; ſuch Comforts I cannot deſire. And therefore, O God, I chooſe rather to be barren, than to bring forth Children which will take evil Ways, and forſake Thee, their Lord and Creator. I chooſe Barrenneſs ten thouſand times, rather than bring forth Children to be eternally miſerable, and be the everlaſting Companions of Devils. Now, this being hidden from me, and only known to Thee, therefore I leave my Petition wholly in thy Hands, deſiring no Grant of it but on this Condition, if thou ſeeſt the Children I ſhall bring forth will be thy Servants. Thus, O God, I reſign this Affair wholly to Thee: Do as Thou knoweſt beſt. Lord, thy Will be done.

Upon Conceiving, and afterwards.

I Return Thee Thanks, O God, that thus Thou haſt been pleaſed to order it. And now, O merciful Father, hear my Petition, I beſeech Thee, which I lay before Thee. I know all Things are in thy Power, and Thou diſpenſeſt thy Bleſſings as Thou thinkeſt fit. Give a Bleſſing, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee, to the Fruit I have conceived, and frame it ſo, with ſuch a good Diſpoſition, that it may be docile, and eaſily inclined to Good.

I ſee a great Difference in the Tempers of Children, and of Youth; that while ſome, through a giddy, unſettled, or perverſe Mind, are expoſed to infinite Hazards, and eaſily are drawn into Wickedneſs; others are much more cautious, ſettled, and reſerved, and, with great Facility, embrace that which is good. Thus their temporal and eternal Good ſeems very much to depend on the Diſpoſitions of their Mind and Body; and I cannot but own a good Diſpoſition to be a very great Bleſſing.

This Bleſſing I aſk of thy fatherly Hand: Since therefore the Child, with which I now go, is in thy Hand, as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, frame it ſo, I beſeech Thee, that it may become a Veſſel of Honour. Mould it in ſuch a Temper, that it may be eaſy in receiving what is good; that it may be inclined to thy Ways. Give it Caution and Conſtancy of Mind, and, in thy Mercy, deliver it from

from all Obſtinacy and Lightneſs. Prepare it, O God, to love Thee and fear Thee, and to be a Child after thy own Heart. And ſince in this I aſk nothing, but that it may become thy Servant; grant my Petition, that I may have the Comfort of ſuch happy Fruit, and thy holy Name be for ever glorified by it.

Againſt Miſcarrying.

O Merciful God, to Thee I now recommend myſelf, beſeeching Thee, to take me into thy Protection, and to perfect the Bleſſings Thou haſt begun in me. Give me Strength to go thro' my Time; deliver me from all Kinds of ill Accidents, and ſuffer me not, by any Indiſcretion, to interrupt the Courſe of Nature; that the Fruit, I have conceived, having its due Growth and Strength, may be brought forth in its Seaſon.

Shew this Mercy to me, I beſeech Thee, for, I confeſs, all is depending on Thee. My Health and Strength muſt be in thy Bleſſing, and no human Helps can give thoſe to me, but as thy Goodneſs ſhall pleaſe to order it. And there are ten thouſand Accidents, which no Care can foreſee or prevent, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not deliver them from me.

To Thee, therefore, O God, I make my Addreſs, and pray thy infinite Goodneſs to watch over me. Be to me a God and Protector, and let no Evil have Power over me. Behold, on Thee I depend; in Thee I put my Truſt: Forſake me not at this Time, neither let my Unworthineſs turn away thy Mercies from me. Go along with me every

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In LABOUR.

SINCE Thou, O Lord, haſt ſo ordered it, that, in Puniſhment of Sin, Children are to be brought forth in Pain; I now bow down before Thee, and offer myſelf to accept of this Penalty which Thou haſt ordained. The Sentence is juſt, and I am boend to acknowledge the Juſtice in ſubmitting to the Trouble of it.

But conſider, O Lord, I beſeech Thee, my great Weakneſs, and give me Strength to bear whatever Thou haſt appointed for me. Leave me not in this Time of Diſtreſs, but by thy heavenly Grace ſupport me. Grant me, if it be thy bleſſed Will, a good Time, and, in thy Mercy, moderate my Pains.

Thou art a God of infinite Power, and canſt give both Patience and Courage to ſuch as are weak. Shew this thy Power in me, a poor, infirm Creature, and now, by thy aſſiſting Grace, help me to go thro' whatever my preſent Condition brings upon me.

I am a Sinner, and it is juſt I ſhould ſuffer. I am an Offender, and it is juſt I ſhould ſubmit

ſubmit to the Chaſtiſement of thy Hand; do with me therefore, O Lord, as Thou wilt. Thou art juſt in all thy Ways, and thy Creatures ought, with Chearfulneſs, to bow down before Thee. Thus, O Lord, I deſire to do at preſent, and from my Heart I now pronounce theſe ſacred Words, Lord, thy Will be done.

§. II.

Now is a Time of Trial; and it is now I am to ſhew myſelf faithful to my Lord.

Help me, O God, in being thus faithful, that I may not offend Thee by any Impatience, but, with a true Submiſſion, may comply with whatever is appointed for me, in the Order of thy Providence.

Now am I called forth to Battle; now am I called to ſhew myſelf a Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt.

O Jeſus, look upon this poor, infirm Clay, and ſtrengthen me from above; for what can I do, if thou, O Lord, art not my Helper?

O Jeſus, I confeſs my Weakneſs; I can do nothing of myſelf; in Thee is my only Truſt; and therefore I fly to Thee for Refuge.

Take me, who am nothing but Weakneſs, into thy Protection, and ſhelter me under the Shadow of thy Wings.

Deliver me, I beſeech Thee, O God of Mercy, from all Danger, and enable me now to go thro' my preſent Difficulties.

Thou haſt ſhewed thy Mercy to me, in carrying me on ſo far; finiſh now, what by thy Bleſſing is brought to this Point, and help me now in this Hour.

Day, and be a Guide to me in all my Ways: Direct me in all Things what I am to do, and preſerve me in Strength, that I may go thro' my full Time. Let no ill Accident occaſion any Thing of Deformity or Lameneſs, in what is to be born of me, but ſhew this Mercy to thy Servant, in granting a ſound Mind in a ſound Body. This Comfort I aſk of Thee; grant my Petition, I beſeech Thee, and be a merciful Father to me.

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Favour me now in thy Mercy, and grant I may ſee the Fruit, Thou haſt given me, brought forth with Life.

Save both me and my Child, and mercifully direct thoſe who are about me, that they may do what is beſt for the Safety of us both.

§. III.

Thus, O God, confeſſing all Power to be in Thee, I put myſelf into thy Hands, and depend entirely upon Thee.

And ſince Thou haſt promiſed not to forſake thoſe who put their Truſt in Thee, I have an entire Confidence in thy Protection, and hope to find Thee my powerful Helper.

Stand by me therefore, O God of Mercy, and now, at this Hour, manifeſt both thy Power and Mercy in me.

Stretch forth thy Hand to me, and ſay to my Soul, Be of good Comfort, fear not; I am thy God.

Thou art my God, I confeſs it; Thou art my God, and in Thee do I put my Truſt.

Thou alone knoweſt what is beſt for me; and therefore, as Thou knoweſt, ſo, Lord, let it be done.

Give me but Grace to do thy Will, and then, O Lord, with a chearful Heart, will I ſay, Lord, thy Will be done.

Thus, O God, I now offer myſelf to thy good Pleaſure, to go thro', under thy Aſſiſtance, whatever Thou ſhalt appoint.

Knowing my Weakneſs, I aſk for a favourable Labour; but, if Thou ſhalt order it otherwiſe, I bow down in Silence, and only aſk this

this one Thing, that I may have Grace to do thy Will; and then, O Lord, command what Thou wilt.

§. IV.

In a difficult Labour.

LORD, help thy Servant, and let her Cry come unto Thee.

Give Ear to her, O God, in this Hour of her Diſtreſs, and mercifully ſend her Relief.

Thou haſt promiſed to hear thoſe who call upon Thee in Tribulation: Behold this thy Servant is in Anguiſh; ſhe calls upon Thee; ſhew thyſelf now to be her God, and help her.

Deliver her, we beſeech Thee, from this her Extremity, and reſcue her Soul out of theſe Streights.

Remember her Weakneſs, O God of Mercy, and, according to her Affliction, ſo give her Strength to bear it.

Have Compaſſion on her, and, being thy Creature, let her find Help from Thee, her God and Creator.

Comfort her, we beſeech Thee, in the Midſt of her Pains, and let her Soul be refreſhed with heavenly Sweetneſs.

Teach her to ſuffer in the Spirit of her Redeemer; and Thou, O Jeſus, communicate to her thy holy Spirit.

Teach her to bear the preſent Croſs, and help her to bear it with Patience.

Give her Patience now, according to the Extremity of her Pains, and with Comfort ſupport her ſinking Spirits.

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Teach her to bear the preſent Croſs, and help her to bear it with Patience.

Give her Patience now, according to the Extremity of her Pains, and with Comfort ſupport her ſinking Spirits.

Give her an humble Heart, that ſhe may quietly ſubmit to her preſent Trouble, and acknowledge, that what ſhe ſuffers is much leſs than ſhe deſerves.

Give her a reſigned Heart, that ſhe may receive the Cup thou now putteſt into her Hand, and think that beſt for her, which is the Accompliſhment of thy Will.

Grant, ſhe may drink this bitter Cup with a Submiſſion due to the Hand that gives it. Grant, O God, ſhe may remember the Hand is thine.

O Jeſus, manifeſt now thyſelf a Helper to her; give her a Senſe of thy Sufferings; and at preſent convince her, that ſuffering with Patience is a good Argument of being thy Diſciple.

But grant her then, O God, thy gracious Aſſiſtance, that the Weakneſs of her Nature may be confirmed by heavenly Strength.

§. V.

O God, who didſt mercifully help *Rebecca* in the Difficulty of her Labour, with the Safety both of her and her Children: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didſt hear the Children of *Iſrael* crying in their Diſtreſs, and delivered them from the Oppreſſion of *Pharaoh*: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didſt hear the *Iſraelites* in their great Streights, and delivered them from the Red-ſea and their Enemies: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God,

O God, who hadſt *David* in thy Protection, and didſt deliver him from infinite Dangers: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didſt hear *Hezechias*, and delivered him both from his Enemies, and from the Danger of Death: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who hadſt Compaſſion on *Daniel*, and didſt deliver him from the Den of Lions: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who didſt hear thy Apoſtles and help them, when they were now ready to periſh in a Storm: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who didſt ſtretch forth thy Hand to *Peter*, and help him, when he was now ſinking under the Waves: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who didſt deliver the poor Woman from her long Infirmity, when ſhe could find no Relief in human Help: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who waſt Phyſician to *Peter*'s Mother-in-Law, and didſt wonderfully deliver her from the Danger of her Infirmity: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who hadſt Compaſſion on the *Cananean* Woman, and didſt mercifully grant her Petition: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jeſus, who didſt reſcue the Ruler's Daughter out of the Jaws of Death, and with new

Give her an humble Heart, that she may quietly submit to her present Trouble, and acknowledge, that what she suffers is much less than she deserves.

Give her a resigned Heart, that she may receive the Cup thou now puttest into her Hand, and think that best for her, which is the Accomplishment of thy Will.

Grant, she may drink this bitter Cup with a Submission due to the Hand that gives it. Grant, O God, she may remember the Hand is thine.

O Jesus, manifest now thyself a Helper to her; give her a Sense of thy Sufferings; and at present convince her, that suffering with Patience is a good Argument of being thy Disciple.

But grant her then, O God, thy gracious Assistance, that the Weakness of her Nature may be confirmed by heavenly Strength.

§. V.

O God, who didst mercifully help *Rebecca* in the Difficulty of her Labour, with the Safety both of her and her Children: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didst hear the Children of *Israel* crying in their Distress, and delivered them from the Oppression of *Pharaoh*: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didst hear the *Israelites* in their great Streights, and delivered them from the Red-sea and their Enemies: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

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O God, who hadſt *David* in thy Protection, and didſt deliver him from infinite Dangers: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

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Life reſtore her a Comfort to her Friends: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who didſt ſtrengthen the Apoſtles, and enable them to go thro' all their difficult Trials: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who didſt wonderfully ſupport the Apoſtles, under the greateſt Oppreſſions: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who didſt enlighten and comfort the Apoſtles under the Terrors of Cruelty and Death: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who didſt ſo raiſe up the Spirits of thy Servants, as even to rejoice in Tribulation: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who filleſt the Souls of thy Servants with inward Joy: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghoſt, who haſt given Courage to infinite of thy Servants, to ſtand with Patience under the Rack, Tortures, and wild Beaſts, and didſt refreſh their Spirits with heavenly Sweetneſs: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O bleſſed Trinity, Three Perſons and One God; infinite in Power, Compaſſion, and Mercy: *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who haſt given us ſo many Inſtances of thy Power and Mercy, in the Relief of ſuch as have called upon Thee in Diſtreſs:

Renew

Renew now theſe thy Mercies, we moſt humbly beſeech Thee, in this thy Servant. Give her Patience in what ſhe ſuffers, and grant, ſhe may bear it with ſuch Submiſſion, as becomes a Diſciple of Jeſus; give her a Will entirely conformed to thine, that all thy Appointments may be welcome to her. But, becauſe ſhe is weak, we implore thy Mercy to have Compaſſion on her, to help her in her preſent Circumſtances, that ſhe may be happily delivered, with the Safety both of her and her Child. Grant this, O God, we beſeech Thee, and mercifully hear our Prayers. Help thy Servant, O God, in her Diſtreſs, help her, we moſt earneſtly beſeech Thee, and be Thou her Deliverer; we aſk this in the Name of thy only Son, bleſſed for evermore, and tho' unworthy of ourſelves, yet through him we hope to find Favour in thy Sight. Have Mercy on thy Servant, O God, have Mercy on her.

Thankſgiving upon being delivered.

WE return Thee Thanks, O Father Almighty, for that Thou haſt been pleaſed to ſhew this Mercy to thy Servant. May all Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth, for ever bleſs thy Name for this thy Goodneſs; and grant, we beſeech Thee, that both Mother and Child may ever acknowledge the Mercy of this Hour, in the beſt Thankſgiving of a holy Life. Take them both into thy Protection; direct thoſe who have the Care of them, and preſerve them from all Evil. *Amen.*

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Upon a Miſcarriage, &c.

TO thy Protection, O God, we recommend this thy Servant; as Thou haſt preſerved her hitherto, ſo we beſeech Thee, to continue thy Mercy to her. Give her Patience under her Troubles, and teach her to ſubmit to thy holy Will. Give her Grace to confeſs, that Thou art ſovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, and that what Thou art pleaſed to order is beſt for us. In this Confeſſion, may ſhe now, in Spirit, bow down before Thee, and ſay from her Heart, Lord, thy Will be done. And thus, O God, under thy ſpecial Protection, may ſhe poſſeſs her Soul in Peace. Strengthen her, we beſeech Thee; abide Thou with her, and grant her Help, according to her Weakneſs, whether of Mind or Body; and let it be thy Mercy to her, that ſhe offend Thee not, through any Impatience.

In Time of Lying-in. Every Morning.

I Thank Thee, O God, for my Preſervation this Night: Preſerve me likewiſe this Day, I beſeech Thee, take me into thy Care, and give me Strength, according to my Neceſſities: Grant me Patience, and a peaceable Submiſſion, under all Pains and Uneaſineſs whatever, that I may not offend Thee thro' any Impatience. Direct me, and thoſe who have the Care of me, that I may ſuffer no Injury thro' Indiſcretion or Overſight; watch Thou over me, who knoweſt all my Weak-

neſs

neſs and Wants, and as Thou knoweſt what is beſt for me, ſo I beſeech Thee to have Compaſſion me.

Give me an humble Heart, and a Spirit reſigned to thy bleſſed Will, that I may approve and embrace that as beſt, whatever Thou art pleaſed to appoint for me or mine. Call my Heart often, in the Day, to the Remembrance of Thee, my God; and, while I enjoy thy Mercies, may the Memory of them refreſh my Soul, and frequently raiſe it up in Thankſgiving to thy infinite Goodneſs. And thus, O God, may my Heart be employed, while my Lips are ſilent.

For this End, I moſt humbly beſeech Thee to grant me the good Government of my Thoughts and Words, that I may not offend in either; that while I enjoy thy Bleſſings, and ſtand in daily need of particular Mercies, I may avoid every Thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee. Grant therefore, that thy Goodneſs towards me may make me more watchful, that I ſin not againſt Thee this Day, in Thoughts or in Words. Thus, O God, I recommend myſelf to thy Protection: I offer myſelf and all mine to thy particular Care, and beg thy Bleſſing to be upon me this Day, and for ever.

At NIGHT.

TO Thee, O God, I render Thanks for my Preſervation this Day: Whatever I have received this Day for the Relief of Mind or Body, I acknowledge it to be thy Bleſſing, and beg I may have at all Times a grateful Senſe

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Senſe of thy Mercies towards me. Before Thee I now humble myſelf, confeſſing in thy Preſence all my Failings of this Day, beſeeching Thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive me whatever I have offended, either in Thoughts, Words, or Deeds. Forgive them all, O God, and let the Blood of thy only Son obtain Mercy for me. Let not my Unworthineſs exclude me, ſince I have him my Advocate. Undertake likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, my Protection this Night: Preſerve me from all Evil, and grant me, if it be thy bleſſed Will, a quiet Reſt. But, if Thou ſhalt order it otherwiſe, for my Exerciſe; give me Patience, at leaſt to bear it, whatever it be; give me an humble Heart, ever ready to acknowledge the Juſtice of all my Appointments, and to think that beſt for me, whatever Thou ordereſt. Thus, O God, I recommend myſelf into thy Hands, and beſeech Thee to grant me a happy Reſt.

For the well educating of Children.

O God, who haſt given me this Charge; give me Grace likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, that I may duly ſatisfy it, for their temporal and eternal Good, whom Thou haſt committed to my Care.

I am very ſenſible of the many Difficulties there are, in doing this well; and ſuch is my Weakneſs, that I know myſelf very unfit for the Taſk I have upon my Hands. But ſince it is the Duty of my State, to which I am called, I hope, Thou, O Lord, wilt enable me to

to perform it as I ought, and give me all the Aſſiſtance which ſuch Weakneſs as mine requires amidſt ſuch Difficulties.

Give me Patience, I beſeech Thee, to bear with all the Trouble which is unavoidable in this Charge, and that I may never be tired with the continual Solicitude which every Day brings with it. Hence, O God, I never may conſult my own Eaſe to my Children's Prejudice, by leaving that to others which requires the Care of a Parent's Eye.

Give me thy daily Help, that I may do all with Diſcretion. Let Diſcretion accompany me in making a true Judgment of Things, that I may underſtand when to connive, when to reprove, when to reward, and when to correct.

Give me ſuch Diſcretion, that I may never connive at what ought to be corrected, or encourage what ought to be reproved: That, whenever I correct or reprove, it may not be done out of Humour, or in Paſſion, but in ſuch a due Manner, as may be moſt for my Children's Good. Grant likewiſe I may not multiply unneceſſary Reproofs, and, by my own Uneaſineſs, bring my Children to a Diſlike of my Company, and to a Contempt of all Reproof.

Give me likewiſe Diſcretion, O God, in the Love of my Children, that I may love them according to Reaſon, and not let Inclination, Nature, or Paſſion, have the Government or Direction of this Love. This, O bleſſed Lord, I aſk with all the Earneſtneſs of my Soul; becauſe I am ſenſible how very blind the Love towards Children is, which is influenced

Senſe of thy Mercies towards me. Before Thee I now humble myſelf, confeſſing in thy Preſence all my Failings of this Day, beſeeching Thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive me whatever I have offended, either in Thoughts, Words, or Deeds. Forgive them all, O God, and let the Blood of thy only Son obtain Mercy for me. Let not my Unworthineſs exclude me, ſince I have him my Advocate. Undertake likewiſe, I beſeech Thee, my Protection this Night: Preſerve me from all Evil, and grant me, if it be thy bleſſed Will, a quiet Reſt. But, if Thou ſhalt order it otherwiſe, for my Exerciſe; give me Patience, at leaſt to bear it, whatever it be; give me an humble Heart, ever ready to acknowledge the Juſtice of all my Appointments, and to think that beſt for me, whatever Thou ordereſt. Thus, O God, I recommend myſelf into thy Hands, and beſeech Thee to grant me a happy Reſt.

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influenced by my Paſſion; and that, by the Suggeſtions of it, Parents become the worſt of Enemies to their own Children; laying in them the Seeds, not only of temporal Misfortunes, but of eternal Ruin. And, O God, what an Affliction muſt this be, when Parents find, that, by following their own Humour, that is, by loving themſelves too much, they have been thus unnaturally cruel to the Children of their own Bowels.

Wherefore, O God, let it be thy Mercy to me, I beſeech Thee, not to be one of theſe unhappy Ones. Teach me rather to deny myſelf in what is moſt difficult to Nature; teach me to govern my Inclinations for my Children's Good; and whatever the Difficulty be, yet ſtill, O moſt gracious Lord, I beg thy helping Grace, that I might rather ſuffer it all, than be thus injurious to thoſe for whom I deſire all Good. For it is far better I ſhould ſuffer all Self-denials, than my Children be expoſed to the ſad Effects of my Blindneſs and Indiſcretion.

Help me therefore, O moſt merciful Father, in this Point; give me Strength, Grace, and Diſcretion; for all theſe are neceſſary for me, in my Weakneſs. Direct me, I beſeech Thee, by thy heavenly Light, and teach me what I am to do; for my Deſire is, to take ſuch a Method as may moſt effectually contribute to the making my Children thy faithful Servants. But what can I do in this difficult Taſk, ſubject to ſo many Overſights, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not help me.

Have

Have Compaſſion therefore on me, O God, and go along with me, every Day, and on every Occaſion directing me what is beſt to be done. Grant, that my great Solicitude may be, not ſo much for their Improvement in what is vain and empty, as for the Accompliſhment of their better Part: For bringing their Minds to the Temper of the Goſpel, in all Humility and Meekneſs, in all Patience. Charity and Obedience: For imprinting in their Souls a deep Senſe of the Love and Fear which are due to Thee; and for making them ſkilled in the Ways of thy Commandments, and doing Good to all.

This is what I deſire to do; help me, O bleſſed Lord, in the Accompliſhment of my Deſires; and grant I may not give them Encouragement, or indiſcreetly ſeek to pleaſe them in ſuch Things as are contrary to what I here propoſe, and likely to draw their Hearts from Thee. Make me wiſe in this, O God, and may I teach them this Wiſdom, to love and ſeek Thee above all Things, and to be afraid of every Thing injurious to the Love which is due to Thee. This I know is hard; but teach me, O God, in this, and all other Particulars, that I may teach them.

That God would bleſs their Children.

TO thy Care, O God, I recommend my Children, moſt humbly beſeeching Thee to be a Father to them, and every Day to favour them with thy Bleſſing. Preſerve them from

influenced by my Paſſion; and that, by the Suggeſtions of it, Parents become the worſt of Enemies to their own Children; laying in them the Seeds, not only of temporal Misfortunes, but of eternal Ruin. And, O God, what an Affliction muſt this be, when Parents find, that, by following their own Humour, that is, by loving themſelves too much, they have been thus unnaturally cruel to the Children of their own Bowels.

Wherefore, O God, let it be thy Mercy to me, I beſeech Thee, not to be one of theſe unhappy Ones. Teach me rather to deny myſelf in what is moſt difficult to Nature; teach me to govern my Inclinations for my Children's Good; and whatever the Difficulty be, yet ſtill, O moſt gracious Lord, I beg thy helping Grace, that I might rather ſuffer it all, than be thus injurious to thoſe for whom I deſire all Good. For it is far better I ſhould ſuffer all Self-denials, than my Children be expoſed to the ſad Effects of my Blindneſs and Indiſcretion.

Help me therefore, O moſt merciful Father, in this Point; give me Strength, Grace, and Diſcretion; for all theſe are neceſſary for me, in my Weakneſs. Direct me, I beſeech Thee, by thy heavenly Light, and teach me what I am to do; for my Deſire is, to take ſuch a Method as may moſt effectually contribute to the making my Children thy faithful Servants. But what can I do in this difficult Taſk, ſubject to ſo many Overſights, if Thou, O Lord, doſt not help me.

Have

Have Compaſſion therefore on me, O God, and go along with me, every Day, and on every Occaſion directing me what is beſt to be done. Grant, that my great Solicitude may be, not ſo much for their Improvement in what is vain and empty, as for the Accompliſhment of their better Part: For bringing their Minds to the Temper of the Goſpel, in all Humility and Meekneſs, in all Patience. Charity and Obedience: For imprinting in their Souls a deep Senſe of the Love and Fear which are due to Thee; and for making them ſkilled in the Ways of thy Commandments, and doing Good to all.

This is what I deſire to do; help me, O bleſſed Lord, in the Accompliſhment of my Deſires; and grant I may not give them Encouragement, or indiſcreetly ſeek to pleaſe them in ſuch Things as are contrary to what I here propoſe, and likely to draw their Hearts from Thee. Make me wiſe in this, O God, and may I teach them this Wiſdom, to love and ſeek Thee above all Things, and to be afraid of every Thing injurious to the Love which is due to Thee. This I know is hard; but teach me, O God, in this, and all other Particulars, that I may teach them.

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from all Evil; let no Misfortune do them any Injury; and, by thy holy Grace, keep them from every Thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee.

Shew thy Power in them, I beſeech Thee, and preſerve them from the Corruption of the World. Give them Inclinations to Good, and confirm them in Reſolutions of being faithful to Thee. Eſtabliſh them againſt the Solicitations of ill Company, and permit them not to be inſnared by ſuch as lead to Evil.

Give them ſuch Diſcretion as is neceſſary in this deceitful World; that they may not admire Shadows, nor catch at empty and ſuperficial Goods. Raiſe their Hearts to the Love of what is eternal; and, for gaining this, teach them to deſpiſe all that is earthly.

Give them Courage to reſiſt or decline whatever is ſinful, and ſuffer no Temptation to prevail againſt them. Deliver them from a raſh, giddy, or vain Mind, and fix in their Hearts ſuch ſound Principles, that they may be faithful both to God and Man. Be Thou, O God, a perpetual Light, a Guide and a Helper to them. Let no Unworthineſs of theirs oblige Thee to forſake them, I beſeech Thee, in all their Ways; and if ever, thro' human Weakneſs, they offend Thee, give them thy Grace to riſe again, and deliver them not up to a reprobate Mind. Into thy Hands, O God, I commend them; be Thou a God and Father to them; and, by thy Grace, may they come at length to have a Part in thy Inheritance. *Amen.*

That God would direct them in the Choice of a State of Life.

O Almighty God, by whom all Things move, undertake, I beſeech Thee, the Care of my Children; (my Child) and ſince both their temporal and eternal Good, in a great Meaſure, depends on the Choice they make, in ſettling for Life; direct them in this great Affair, and ſuffer them not to do any Thing thro' ill Advice, Raſhneſs, Indiſcretion, or Paſſion. Defend them, O God, if it be thy bleſſed Will, from making an ill Choice, and let it be thy Mercy to them, to lead them to that which may be their Comfort here, and be a Means of coming at length to the Poſſeſſion of Thee.

Wherefore, O bleſſed Lord, I implore thy Grace upon them, that they may not be under the Influence of Pride, or worldly Intereſt, or other human Reſpects: But grant, I beſeech Thee, that as Eternity is infinitely above all that is temporal, ſo they may conſider it in the firſt Place, and think nothing fit for their Choice, where this, through ill Circumſtances, muſt be put to the Hazard, or any Ways expoſed. Help them, O God, in this; give them Underſtanding to know Things, Diſcretion to diſcern what is for their Good, and Reſolution to make Choice of it. In this great Affair leave them not to themſelves, but be Thou their Light and their Guide, that they may do what is for the Comfort of their Friends, and for

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their own everlaſting Good. Hear me, O merciful Father, and grant this my Petition, that I may for ever give Praiſe to thy Name.

Thankſgiving for any particular Bleſſing.

TO Thee, O eternal Father, I render Thanks for this thy particular Mercy to me; I acknowledge myſelf unworthy of the leaſt of thy Favours, having lived ungrateful amidſt the wonderful Effect of thy Goodneſs towards me; and every Day being encompaſſed with Bleſſings, yet how little mindful have I been of the Hand from whence they came! Hence I cannot but admire thy Bounty, which, not checked by my Ingratitude, is ſtill opening its Treaſures to me. But when I look farther upon my own unhappy ſelf, and ſee how often, under the Enjoyment of thy Mercies, I have tranſgreſſed thy Commands, and, confederate with the worſt of Enemies, have rebelliouſly lifted up my Head againſt Thee, abuſing thy own Gifts, to thy greater Diſpleaſure; and, yet, notwithſtanding theſe wretched Provocations, ſtill find thy Mercies daily flowing in upon me, with the Addition of new Favours: When I reflect upon this my infamous Ingratitude, and this thy infinite Goodneſs, What can I do, but fall down ſurprized, and with the profoundeſt Homage adore that Mercy, which I cannot comprehend, which is inviting with Bleſſings, where the greateſt of all Puniſhments are due!

What

What can I do but publiſh thy Praiſes, and confeſs to the whole Creation, that Thou art infinite in Mercy and Goodneſs, and that thy Name is infinitely adorable?

But what is all that I can ſay, who am but an inconſiderable and ſinful Worm? Rather let all Creatures join in the Praiſes of their Lord; and you, bleſſed Spirits, who aſſiſt before the Throne, you, who better know how merciful and good our Lord is, fall down and adore before him. Bleſſing, and Glory, and Wiſdom, and Thankſgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might be unto our God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

But ſtill there is one Homage which particularly belongs to me; and that is, ſo to confeſs the Engagement of thy Goodneſs, O God, as to offer myſelf to Thee, for thy Servant for ever.

Behold then, this I here do at this Moment; I acknowledge thy Mercy to me, though moſt unworthy; I acknowledge myſelf, beſides infinite other Titles, now engaged to Thee, by this Effect of thy Goodneſs; and therefore I here now, proſtrate before Thee, confeſs this Obligation, and offer myſelf to live faithful in thy Service for ever. I offer myſelf to live in the Obſervance of thy Law, and in doing thy Will; becauſe it is juſt that what is received from Thee ſhould be again returned to Thee.

This I own to be juſt, and that my Guilt will be monſtrous Ingratitude, if, again, unmindful of Thee, I trample on thy Commandments, and deſpiſe thy Law. But knowing my

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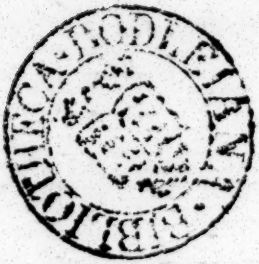
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FINIS.

The business in which we cannot ask God's protection & assistance, cannot be an innocent pursuit; the amusement for which we dare not thank him, cannot be an innocent pleasure. This rule strongly impressed on the mind & applied to every circumstance in life, will be a constant guard over virtue in all situations, & a constant check to every thought as well as action which is contrary to our duty.


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